

WATCH DOGS 2 HACKING INTO UBI'S SEQUEL

PLAYSTATION

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ISSUE
271

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PS4 & VITA
GAMES RATED

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DEUS EX

MANKIND DIVIDED

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IT'S HIGH NOON



I HAD A fair idea going into *Overwatch* that I was going to enjoy it, but I genuinely didn't expect it to get its hooks into me like it has. I've not even played it nearly as much as

some others in the office, but that's not because I don't want to – quite the opposite, in fact. In a rare feat of self-control, I'm actually limiting myself with how much I can play because I know if I don't, nothing else will ever get done. It's all too easy to just sit in a lobby and just hope the *COD* kids learn something about how to play the damn objective between matches (spoilers: they never do), but I'm not going to do that any more. No, I'm only going into battle from now on when I have friends at my side.

As in *Rainbow Six Siege* late last year, I've found playing with randoms to be a real slog and while the game's quality still manages to shine through even with so many dimwits in the way, it's only with a pre-made group (it needn't even be a full team) that you really get to see how good the game is. The synergy between certain characters is awesome, leading to some interesting team dynamics that can change whenever anyone moves to a new hero – if a friend goes Pharah, you better believe I'm gonna rock Mercy and shower her in buffs from on high to make her rocket splash damage *insane*. Also, playing with a group is better purely for the fact that it leaves less room on your team for idiots who just pick Widowmaker all the time.

It's not like PS4 had a shortage of awesome online shooters before, but Blizzard's FPS debut is the best one for me – *Destiny* would probably pip it were it not for the fact that Bungie is still struggling with balancing two years later while Blizzard pretty much nailed it first go. As much as I may hate Bastion, melting him with a good team behind me will never get old...

Enjoy the issue and I'll see you online.

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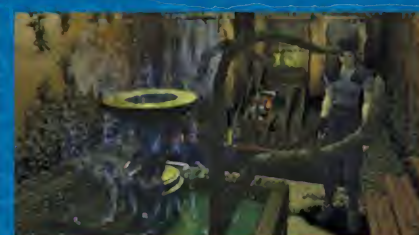
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FEATURE | DEUS EX: MANKIND DIVIDED

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINES



DEUS EX: MANKIND DIVIDED IS A CURIOUS BEAST, ONE WITH A MESSAGE OF GRIM TIDINGS FROM A FUTURE WHERE OUR OBSESSION WITH TECH HAS GOTTEN THE BETTER OF US, THOUGH IT DELIVERS THAT MESSAGE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY ITSELF. **PLAY** GOES HANDS-ON WITH JENSEN'S LATEST MORAL ROLLERCOASTER AND SPEAKS TO THE TALENTED TEAM BEHIND THE GAME...

As we move into an era where things like augmented reality, wearable tech that becomes a part of who we are, fully immersive VR and hologram advancements are all happening and being celebrated in the here and now, it's growing increasingly apparently that it's 'Could we...?' rather than 'Should we...?' that is the leading question in the modern tech market. As great as it is to see the former play out, to see the tech of science fiction from only a decade or two ago become reality, there are genuine fears surrounding the latter. The closer technology comes to being integrated into people on a mass scale – which, believably, could be only a few years out – the more risk there is of something going wrong. Only here, it's not a virus that corrupts your laptop's hard drive, but rather one that could alter who and what you are on a personal level.

That's pretty much the core conceit of *Mankind Divided*, and for once, the recent use of a live action trailer to set this up was actually a really smart play. This is a current issue, a fear, grounded in where we are today and, seeing how far we've come in the last decade, something that is legitimately within the reach of modern science. We've gone from the PC original being a good fifty years behind its chronological setting – long enough to make its contents feel as much like hard sci-fi as the flying cars, ray guns and teleporters of Sixties science fiction – to today, thanks to prequel *Human Revolution* and this follow-up, *Mankind Divided*, being only a decade behind the fiction, suddenly turning fantasy into topical, moral and political commentary that hits far closer to home. And that's something the team is seemingly both aware of and looking to fall in line with.

"Uninformed sci-fi is something I don't want us to do," explains executive art director Jonathan Jacques-Belletête. "There's so much bad uninformed futurism and sci-fi out there where artists just pull stuff straight out of their heads before getting informed about how these things might actually work in the real world. We're making sure that there's a lot of thought behind the futurism, that it's not just 'This building looks like this because we're in 2029'." Like that live action trailer, the game is much more affecting for this plausibility – seeing an early passage of play where Jensen's augmentations are on the fritz makes



▲ Non-lethal options are plentiful, from stun darts to close-range concussive blasts that blow enemies back... which can be a bit less non-lethal if they fall.

▲ Talos Rucker leads an aug rights group – appealing to his better nature might prove a little easier if you don't leave a trail of augmented bodies in your wake.



it feel more like an inconvenience than anything else, like having your phone GPS pack up when you're lost in a foreign city or something. Mass catastrophes like that which sets up the game – where augs are forced to act against their will by their implants, in turn causing a rather different rift between the haves and the have-nots than that which shapes today's socioeconomic climate – are depicted as freak occurrences. Jensen's trip to his local fixer to get his body sorted treated by all involved with no more urgency than a trip to get a phone screen fixed today.

Despite dealing with issues and themes that perhaps feel more tangible and familiar than before, Jacques-Belletête is keen to have the game's design keep players on their toes mentally. "My role is to take the team's references and inspirations and find the spicier stuff that really brings in the *Deus Ex* feeling. Things that will break expectations, and that's what creates desire in people," he reasons. "If you see something you've seen a million times before, it goes into a little drawer in your brain with all those other things. That's how your memory functions, so it's mixed in with all the other times you saw it and it's really hard for your brain to remember it. It's just one big blur. But when you see something that breaks expectations, your memory isn't so sure what to do with it – it breaks it down and puts it into a whole bunch of different compartments, so it becomes a lot more present in your brain as it's in all these different places. That's really what I try to do with everything. It's not always successful... it's not always a good idea! But that's what I try to do, and for that I need to be constantly consuming things. Architecture, fashion, people, weird shows... anything but videogames, almost. If you want to break expectations, you have to look somewhere else."

Even though the game is dealing with real world locations, they're designed to feel like their counterparts more than act as interactive tourist guides – to capture the essence of the chosen setting while mixing that with a little bit of the *Deus Ex* special sauce. "The cool thing about Prague," says Jacques-Belletête of one of *Mankind Divided*'s settings, "is that with cyberpunk, you don't erase the past and build over it – it's always the past and the future mixed together. Having this "



▲ Breach mode – a challenge mode, essentially – appears to offer all of the augmentations and tools of the main game, but the virtual setting means that they can be taken to the extreme here.



▲ A combination of stealth and violence is a legitimate option, although takedowns still deplete your energy – a more patient approach that avoids confrontation altogether is often a better way to conserve resources.

beautiful old city and clashing it with cyberpunk elements made it even more potent. It's a really good mix, then we bring in that modern art, Jensen, the cops and yeah, it's all there. It looks like Prague – anyone from Prague would recognise it – but then it's got this crazy futuristic layer over it." Character, identity and variety are all clearly incredibly important to the team, even in more typical settings. The Dubai mission we played, for instance – set in a hotel that was abandoned mid-construction – could easily have felt like one of *Rainbow Six Vegas'* in-progress casinos or any number of gaming construction sites, but that design mantra of keeping the brain from being easily able to categorise and process things is still hard at work. "You see construction materials, you see cranes... all that stuff. You've seen *that* before. But there are still these little spikes of *Deus Ex* stuff within that level," Jacques-Belletête confirms, offering further explanation for the 'typical' nature of this setting. "There's a reason that Dubai's like this – it was planned like this, it was wanted like this and that's fine. But most of the time, I try really hard even in generic places to have something that will make people say 'Holy shit.'"

Even within this, apparently the closest to a 'generic' environment we can expect from *Deus Ex*, we indeed find plenty to be impressed and intrigued by. In truth, it's incredibly hard to get an accurate cross-section of the game from so small and isolated a segment. Here, combat options (or those to avoid it entirely) are more or less locked down before you drop into the area – opt for the deadly force loadout and you'll find your silent takedown potential is extremely limited, for instance, but the payoff is that you're given the tools to quickly clear

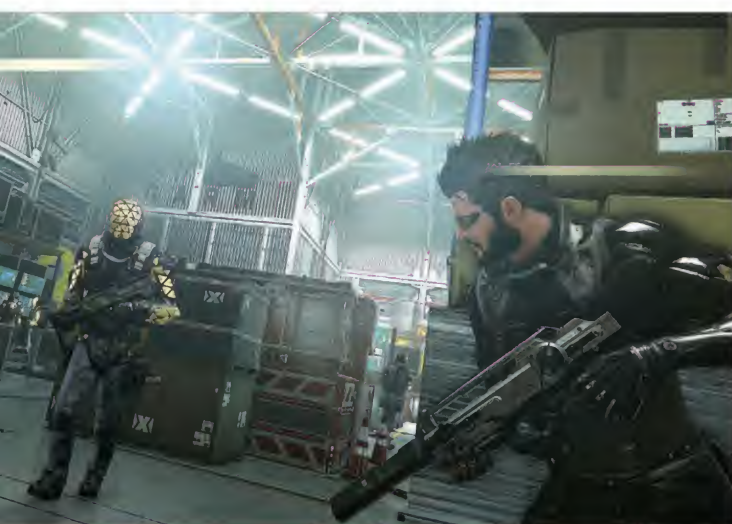




READY, SET, GO!

After the runaway success of *Hitman*'s diorama-themed puzzle spin-off and the format proving its versatility by even adapting to accommodate the more action-heavy nature of *Tomb Raider* without too much strain, it should come as little surprise to see another string added to Square Enix's mobile bow as *Deus Ex* joins the *Go* family.

Thematically, it actually makes more sense than both its predecessors – the cyberpunk stylings of the game tie in well to themes of hacking and infiltration that manifest themselves in this mobile twist on things, and the abilities from the main games carry over well. There are terminals to be hacked to rearrange pathways or turn turrets on enemies, cloaking pick-ups to hide Jensen while traversing a single tile and likely a lot more besides – we only got to play the first few levels but even from those, it was clear that the franchise was a good fit for the format and we look forward to seeing how far the augs are pushed by the inevitably more complex tail end of the final game.



"IT'S ABOUT TRYING TO CREATE A SOUL FOR THE GAME... IF YOU JUST BASE IT ON TECH, IT PROBABLY LACKS SOUL"

rooms, albeit in a more heavy-handed manner. The lack of ambiguity over dialogue choice is welcome, full previews available on highlighting each available option in stark contrast to the Telltale/*Mass Effect* route of having brief synopses of responses that can frustratingly shove you in the wrong direction at times. This mission's simplicity in terms of both loadouts and structures seems intentional – assuming the well-placed and genuinely useful tutorial segments as final rather than placeholder, this feels like a solid entry point to the game rather than something picked from later on, and the mission's climax sets up a classic morally grey narrative thread that will ultimately help shape how you build your own personal version of Jensen.

The suggestion that the game may have been shaped or influenced by the new wave of technology the series will for the first time call home is scoffed at ("I don't see how you can be 'influenced' by a machine!" Jacques-Belletête laughs), but the franchise's artistic lead is quick to talk us through his reasoning. "I'm the kind of art director who is all about the allegories behind the visuals and the messages that they carry," he tells us. "To me, I'm as much telling you a story as Mary [DeMerle] who literally writes the story. It's very common today in our industry to hear the phrase 'Show, don't tell' but back when we started out, it was less heard and it's something that we've always used. Adam Jensen's apartment is his 'museum' – that's actually what we called it during production. You can just walk around and you're told stuff just by looking at and watching things.

"For me, it's about trying to create a soul for the game and if you only base your stuff on graphics and on the latest tech, what's going to happen is that in six or seven years from now, your game isn't going to look good any more because it was just based on tech. And if you just base it on tech, it most probably lacks soul – ten years down the line, there's no soul and it looks like an ancient game, so you're sort of left with nothing. I'm very much about first and foremost trying to sow messages and meaning into the art direction and taking it from there. If you look at *Human Revolution*, the technical side was a little bit lacking – we're all aware and we've admitted it, but we still won some art direction awards and nominations and whatnot. Now that we're 'next-gen', not only will we have all the visual communication that's important to us – the soul, basically – but now at the same time, the tech will be there too."

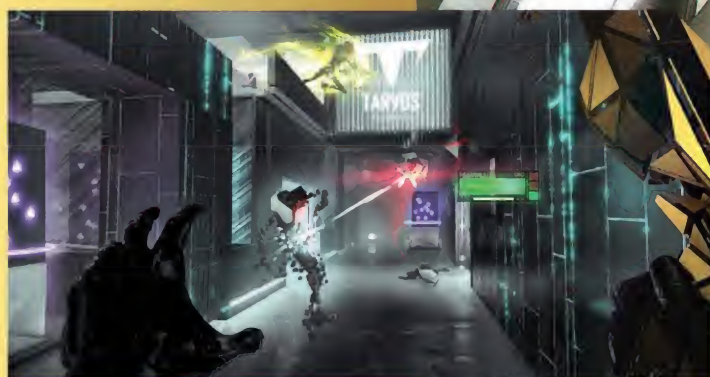
Our own tech is not the only thing Square Enix is looking to get more out of, either – *Deus Ex* itself has plenty of science of its own that could be built into something bigger. And it will be. Enter Breach mode, a standalone 'challenge' mode, for want of a less generic term, that acts as a literal way to play out all the hacking and other digital infiltration that goes on in this high-tech world. While mechanically similar to the main game, it's a chance for both creators and players to spread their virtual wings a little wider, encompassing all kinds of different play styles and mechanics (including some that might be a little too abstract for the main game) in bite-sized chunks of gameplay that inspire competition and self-improvement via leaderboards. "For a long time, we've wanted to experiment, to give something else to players on top of the main game," producer Fleur Marty tells us. "We were playing with the idea of challenge maps at the beginning and we got to thinking that we have all these cool gameplay mechanics but in a full *Deus Ex* single-



THE STRONG ARM OF THE LORE

Not to be outdone by Konami's mission to fit a 25-year-old amputee gamer with a Snake-style prosthetic, Square Enix too is looking to try and have its mechanical-armed star give something back to the community. We're told that blueprints and data for two different models – one styled after Jensen's in-game appearance and the other more abstract, polygonal and stylised – will be made available in order to allow those who have lost a limb the opportunity to potentially 'augment' themselves in real life. Actual plausibility and functionality is yet to be seen, of course – a demo model we saw (hooked up to a PC and a camera) was able to replicate basic finger movements, although we suspect connecting such a thing to a human brain may be a somewhat more challenging case study.

"WE'LL HAVE PEOPLE FINISH LEVELS IN SIX SECONDS AND THE DESIGNERS ARE LIKE 'HOW DID YOU DO THAT?!' THE MODIFIERS ADD A LOT OF CHAOS"





▲ Though heavily stylised, Breach mode feels like it fits within the *Deus Ex* universe. That its overarching stories flesh out the characters and corporations of the core world also serves to cement this.



player experience, they are very constrained by the fact that we need to be credible and realistic. So we started thinking, what if we took these systems and put them in a completely abstract environment where we wouldn't be constrained? We started prototyping these bite-sized chunks of gameplay and people we having a lot of fun with it."

We were a little dubious at first, but quickly got the bug. Some levels might require a more forceful approach, or others greater agility – it's a chance to mess around with all that *Deus Ex* has to offer (and then some) without ever feeling like you need to base an entire playthrough around a particular approach. Loadouts are decided upon pre-mission, and only the confines of a memory allowance (which can be increased as you progress) determine what you can equip. This means free rein over a vast pool of weapons and augs for each task, with many taken even further than in the main game on account of the stylised action playing out inside a canon form of virtual reality, as a hacker breaking into a corporation's data files.

"We're shipping with three corporations, plus the first tutorial one. Later, we'll be releasing new corporations, which means a whole new set of maps and a new conspiracy to go along with it, but also new gameplay ingredients that go with the corporation in question," Marty explains, going on to detail just how closely these digital invasions will tie into the lore of the businesses involved. "What we're trying to do in telling the stories of these corporations is make sure that everything conveys the personality of the company, from art style to level design to gameplay elements. For instance, one of our corporations is Steiner-Bisley, a German weapon manufacturer. So when you're in Breach infiltrating them, they're these big wide-open levels that feel almost foundry-like – the lighting is very orange and there's pixelised magma on the walls and a lot of the AIs in there will have heavy weaponry. But if you infiltrate Versalife – which is more about bioengineering and medical – it's going to be much more organic, very green, very vertical and very weird, with a lot of platforming elements.

"We're already seeing – and it's a big word so I'm going to be careful with it – emergent gameplay here," she continues. "Level designers of course have something in mind when they create the levels but when we start playing them, you'll have people finish levels

in six seconds and the designers are like, 'How did you do that?! It's not possible!' The fact that we have the modifiers adds a lot of chaos to this and there are so many combinations that we can't test them all, so we don't know! Maybe there are some that will really break some maps and actually, we're kinda hoping for that because we're hoping players will take all the new toys we're giving them and play around with them." Said modifiers come via booster packs awarded for progress through the digital mainframe among other methods, including microtransactions, although you shouldn't panic about having to spend extra money just yet. "We are really, *really* trying to balance the game so that if you don't want to, you don't have to," Marty reassures us. "We're just thinking about those players who just want to go through all the content once, fast, and don't want to worry about getting better at the game. We're being extremely careful with balancing."

It's here that the game's narrative themes and the fears they sing of from a not-so-distant future crash headfirst into those of today, namely the proliferation of additional payments in full-price games. After an hour or two with the mode, it never feels mercenary or as though we'd need to pay to progress; more like we'd be able to isolate where certain perks might do well and return to those missions (if and when RNGesus smiled upon us) in search of a better score. Were this directly competitive, this system might be a problem but here, thanks to the timeless nature of a leaderboard system, there's nothing to stop smart score-chasers simply returning to targets months later, nor anything to hinder those who just want to make steady progress.

"We know a lot of players have their own playstyles and may not want to redo the whole campaign to try another," reasons Marty when we discuss the greater freedom of Breach. "But that's also one of the reasons why we have those random booster packs – you will have to make do with what you get from them. You might be someone that played through the whole game using only a tranquiliser rifle but might find that all you get in your first Breach booster pack is a shotgun. You can try and get more boosters until you get the weapon you want, or you can give it a try. And maybe you'll enjoy it!"

▲ Tension between augs and 'naturals' makes it hard to know who you can trust. Choosing the right side will be tough... if there even is a right side.



INDIEVELOPMENT

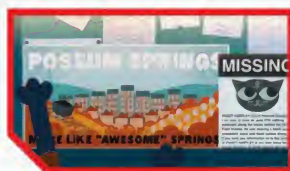
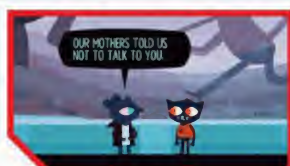
Our indie experts delve into the exciting, strange and intriguing world of indie development to pick out the best of what's coming to PlayStation



AS THE OLD adage goes, you should never judge a book by its cover. Sure, you can often tell what a game might be like simply by looking at it, but that's absolutely not the case with **NIGHT IN THE WOODS**. So don't be suckered in by seeing its cute feline hero Mae jump around Possum Springs, because this game is *dark*. Dealing with mature themes and championing narrative over traditional gameplay, you'll be able to take in the sights of your old home town and hang out with old friends, with what you do and who with ultimately offering different windows into the setting and story that will encourage multiple plays.

Games like *Everybody's Gone To The Rapture* and *Gone Home* have proven that console players are interested in titles that put story first so hopefully, the same crowd will be able to see past the presentation here – most of *Night In The Woods'* peers are first-person and relatively realistic, after all – because it looks like it's going to be taking narrative every bit as seriously as those games, just with a unique

AOX The dark tone of *Night In The Woods* sits at odds with its cute characters, and we love that.



art style and melancholy tone. It's due for release on PS4 later in the year, and we're really looking forward to chilling out with the game's adorable yet miserable cast.

If that's a little on the bleak side for you, how about something daft? Things don't come much dafter than **100FT ROBOT GOLF**, so that should do nicely. The premise is so simple that the title tells you all you really need to know about the game, except for the fact that it seems to be as much about smashing things up and beating up other robotic golfers as it does about chasing birdies and eagles.

Interestingly, this was one of the first games announced for PlayStation VR, although we're not sure how that's really going to add to the experience, if at all.



DEV DIARY Hello Games' Sean Murray on the true meaning of 'indie'

It's hard to define, but the opposite of corporate, basically. That is something personally I feel that Hello Games still is. That's the bit I would actually be sensitive about. I would feel hurt if someone said 'you guys are really corporate now'. And I think *No Man's Sky* as a game is quite indie. There are other things as well, like the size of the team. We're actually reasonably small as an indie studio. For a group that's normally small, we're super-small. We're smaller than studios like Capybara. I think when you look at everything that we're doing, that's pretty crazy and a really positive thing. I like the idiocy of that.

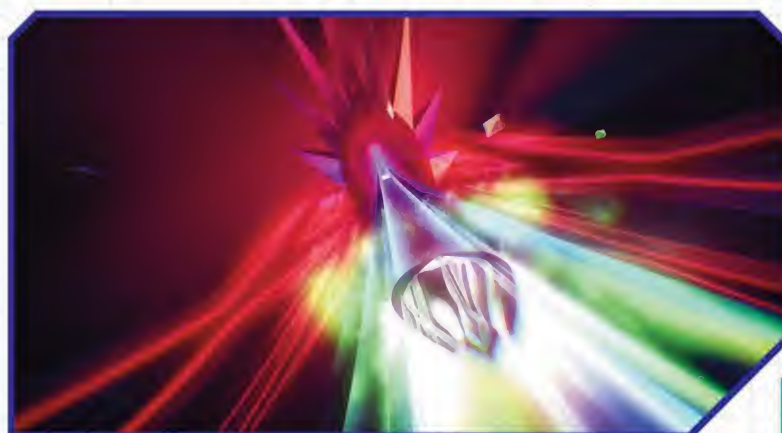


On the other end of the VR spectrum sits THUMPER, a seemingly simple rhythm-action game that appears to be like playing a simplified *Amplitude* at 6,000 miles per hour. The abstract tunnels that you hurtle down are trippy dreamscapes, scenes you literally can't see anywhere else being beamed directly into your eyes and caning along at breakneck pace. We're not sure our bodies and brains are ready for this kind of intense stimulation, but it's exactly the sort of game we're willing to find out for.

Given how fast everything moves, control is stripped way back and it only uses one stick and one button. You slam onto pads, scrape along walls, smash into parts of the music... it's all extremely physical, which would go some way to explaining how the developer ended up creating a new genre for the game in 'rhythm violence'. What we've heard of the soundtrack so far has been ace (a cornerstone of the genre that we're glad to see seems steady already) and it's safe to say that fans of *Rez* will be interested in this. While really quite different in terms of gameplay, style similarities are clear.



AOXO The trippy environments should make *Thumper* an absolutely perfect fit for PlayStation VR.



"COSMIC STAR HEROINE WILL PROBABLY BE AS CLOSE AS WE EVER GET TO A NEW PHANTASY STAR GAME"



That's enough about VR for now, though – let's move onto something decidedly more old-school. **COSMIC STAR HEROINE** is the new title from Zeboyd Games, the indie studio behind *Cthulhu Saves The World* and *Breath Of Death VII*. Those games both acted as send-ups of typical JRPG characters and tropes, considering which they played superbly. Now, though, Zeboyd appears to be leaving parody behind and using the skills it has learned in taking the piss out of the classics to instead write a love letter to them. *Cosmic Star Heroine*, due out later this year, combines elements of vintage sci-fi RPGs like *Phantasy Star* and *Star Ocean* with anime stylings from around the same era, the last point being particularly clear from the thumping synth rock soundtrack that accompanied the game's excellent E3 trailer.

While it might seem like a much more serious game on the surface, Zeboyd's trademark humour still manages to creep in and the writing seems great from what we've seen so far. Given that Sega hates money now and will never bring *Phantasy Star Online 2* to the western market, this will probably be as close as we ever get to a new *Phantasy Star*.

AOXO Zeboyd's latest game is clearly inspired by retro classics like *Phantasy Star*.



FUNDED CONSORTIUM: THE TOWER

PLATFORMS: PS4
ETA: Q1 2018



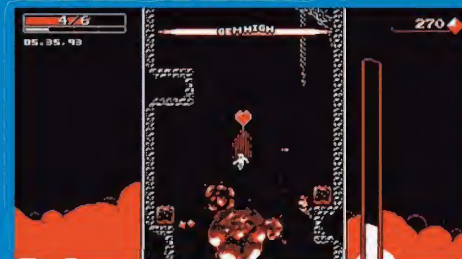
The latest success story of new crowd-funding platform Fig is this sequel to the well-received PC original from a few years back. It's a first-person sci-fi adventure with loads of character interaction and clear consequences for everything you say and do. Still not really sure what it is? "Imagine the original *Deus Ex* videogame, combined with the film *Die Hard*," reads the elevator pitch on the Fig page. Sold.

WISHLIST LUMBERMANCER



This oddity managed to smash its Kickstarter goal thousands of times over... but then again, the original target was a mere \$15. The game is already done – that money is purely going towards its eccentric creator getting some pizza. The object? Guide your summoned logs with one stick and the titular hero with the other to defeat ghosts in what is basically solo co-op. To be honest, we were on board when we saw it had a power-up called Sexy Ham...

IFYOU LOVE... NEW RETRO GAMES



Indie darling *Downwell* recently arrived on PS4 and while it's a little pricier than the Steam version, it's worth every penny.

ETA 15 NOVEMBER | PUB UBISOFT | DEV IN-HOUSE

Watch Dogs 2

Update in progress



Ubisoft has got to be one of the most erratic studios on the modern gaming scene.

Just look at *Watch Dogs 2* – it couldn't be much further

removed from its dour, morose predecessor if it wanted to be; but still, it's difficult to know which 'version' of Ubisoft is pulling the strings behind the polygons. Is *Watch Dogs 2* the work of a studio that has a habit of promising the world and catastrophically failing to deliver – the hangmen that presided over select *Assassin's Creed* games in years past? Or are we getting the Ubisoft that seems eager to challenge perception, to innovate and redefine whatever genre it touches – the visionaries responsible for guiding *The Division* and *Rainbow Six Siege*? It's still early days, but we're currently inclined to lean towards the latter option.

It's difficult not to be immediately dragged into the chaotic spectacle of *Watch Dogs 2*. It's hypnotically boisterous, defiantly confident and looks to be impossibly innovative in the open world space. Ubisoft is taking the franchise to San Francisco to focus on a new story, new mechanics and, integrally, an all-new character – one who's armed with powerful hacking abilities designed to give players complete control over their experience.

"We listened to what the fans had to say following *Watch Dogs*," says returning creative director Jonathan Morin, noting that the team spent months scouring forums for feedback as it went about planning and approaching a sequel. "We are pushing for deeper hacking gameplay where players can really feel like they can think outside the box to solve their problems... we want players to feel like hackers who are hacking the game to win: manipulating people for their own benefits, turning factions against each other, disrupting traffic with great control or [doing] entire missions without even moving by just hacking remotely."

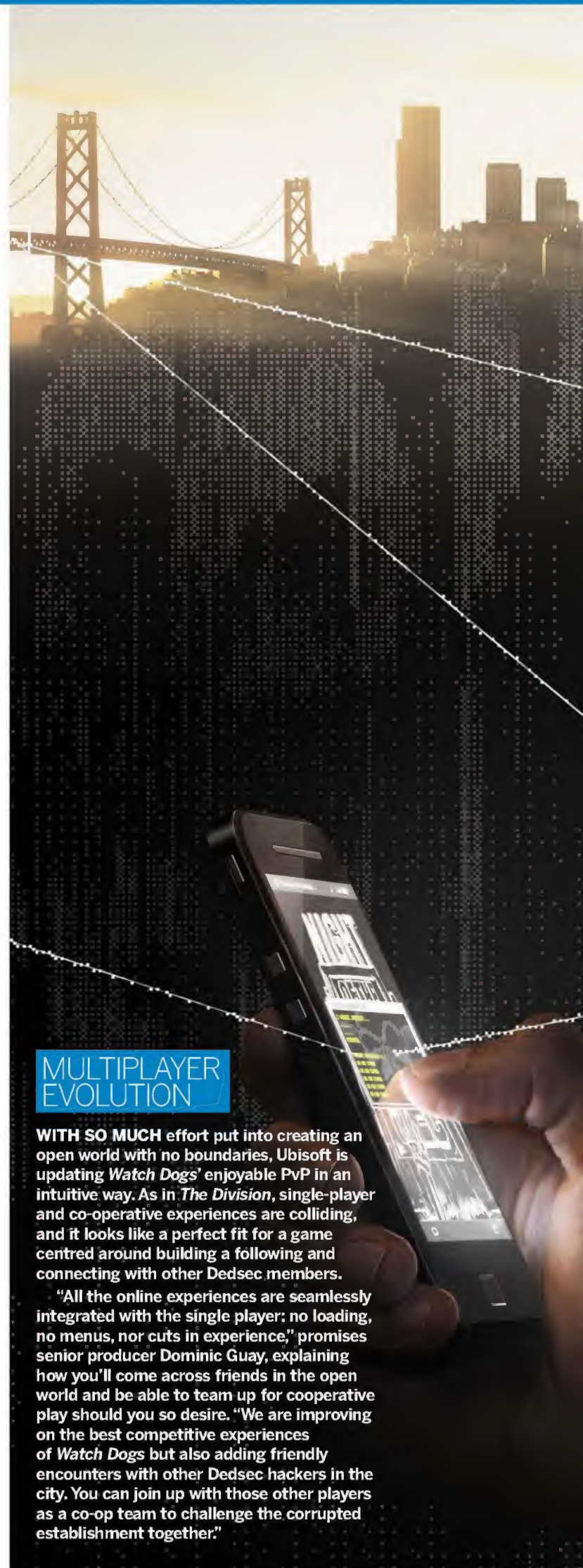
Leaving Chicago and Aiden Pearce behind doesn't seem to have been a difficult decision for Ubisoft. The Bay Area is such a natural fit for the franchise it's a wonder *Watch Dogs* didn't plant its flag here to begin with. San Francisco has been described as the "Wild West of technology", creating a world that revolves around the tech knowledge of characters that grew up embedded in Silicon Valley.

"The San Francisco Bay Area represents the birthplace of the tech revolution," says Morin. "It is a hacker paradise with a specific state of mind. The San Francisco Bay Area brings something entirely fresh since it's less about surveillance and a lot more about the new economy of information, data mining and advanced analytics."

Given that the original *Watch Dogs* so routinely ground to a halt with a narrative revolving around the social anxiety towards an emerging surveillance culture, it's likely the mention of "economy of information, data mining and advanced analytics" doesn't get the juices flowing. But the appeal of *Watch Dogs 2* stems out of new protagonist Marcus Holloway, a born-and-raised Oakland hacker who's as immediately charming as he is socially impactful – a total 180 from Pearce's broody brand of trench coat justice and exactly what this sequel was crying out for.

"Marcus is a young, brilliant hacker who grew up in Oakland and experienced the injustices of the ctOS 2.0 system first-hand. Now he wants to break the system wide open and give a second chance to the people who the system has wronged," notes senior writer Lucien Soulban, pitching Holloway as a kid who begins his journey with larger-than-life hacker group Dedsec after being mistakenly profiled in the city he loves. "He knows people's rights and privacy are being trampled. At first it's personal, he wants to stop the surveillance and collection of data, but after a while, it's not just about what happened to him but what's happening to everyone. It's about what comes next and stopping that from happening."

Unlike the settings of its other games like *The Division* and *Assassin's Creed*, Ubisoft isn't trying to build a 1:1 scale recreation of California's Bay Area here. Instead, it's creating an urban theme park of sorts, dividing the Bay Area into six regions – Downtown, Civic, Coast, Oakland, Marin and Silicon Valley – equalling "46 neighbourhoods with unique artistic signatures and distinctive aesthetic flavours," as art director Mathieu Leduc puts it. "Not only does it represent the birthplace of the tech revolution, but San Francisco is influential for trends in art, music and architecture. The Bay Area's neighbourhoods and its people are as diverse as they are fascinating."



MULTIPLAYER EVOLUTION

WITH SO MUCH effort put into creating an open world with no boundaries, Ubisoft is updating *Watch Dogs*' enjoyable PvP in an intuitive way. As in *The Division*, single-player and co-operative experiences are colliding, and it looks like a perfect fit for a game centred around building a following and connecting with other Dedsec members.

"All the online experiences are seamlessly integrated with the single player: no loading, no menus, nor cuts in experience," promises senior producer Dominic Guay, explaining how you'll come across friends in the open world and be able to team up for cooperative play should you so desire. "We are improving on the best competitive experiences of *Watch Dogs* but also adding friendly encounters with other Dedsec hackers in the city. You can join up with those other players as a co-op team to challenge the corrupted establishment together."



“PLAYERS CAN DECIDE HOW THEY
APPROACH EACH SITUATION, BECOMING
EITHER THE AGGRESSOR, THE GHOST
OR THE TRICKSTER HACKER”

The city might not be accurate to its real world counterpart, but that's alright by us – it's looking alive, dense and packed with opportunities to utilise *Watch Dogs 2*'s new systems, structure and mechanics. This is where the blind ambition of the game begins to come into focus – if Ubisoft is actually able to deliver on its promises here (and the early gameplay we've already seen looks promising), traditional open world adventure design convention is in for a rude awakening.

Watch Dogs 2 is looking to break the feeling that an open world is centred around us, the players, so that it instead lives on its own independence. It's achieving this by making monumental upgrades to AI routines. Interactions between NPCs will happen independently of you; each has their own personalities, secrets and most importantly, motivations. The original *Watch Dogs* promised something similar, though it looks as if the sequel may actually deliver. It's an important

realisation for the studio, because Holloway is able to hack and manipulate essentially everything in the world.

"Much like in the first *Watch Dogs*, the player can hack into the city infrastructure," says Danny Belanger, game director on *Watch Dogs 2*. "You can hack every person walking around or even change their profile to manipulate them indirectly. You can get anyone arrested, distracted or even attacked. You can remote hack every car in the city to make them accelerate, steer or reverse at will. You can remote control lifts and cranes and start to be creative with physics. You can use your jumper drone to incite people and see if things will escalate... every single player will find a weapon to suit their taste and mood."

Essentially, intrusion is being upgraded so it's no longer based around the 'press X to hack' monotony of the original design. *Watch Dogs 2* is centred around player choice in a fashion that we rarely see in games – it has as much

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

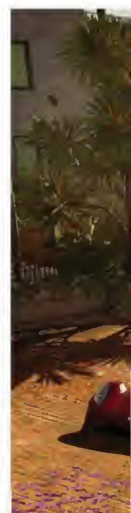
WITH THE SUGGESTION that the game may shy away from the usual semi-linear mission progression seen in open-world adventures comes a whole new set of concerns. That structure allows for smart pacing and challenge escalation, drip-feeding increasingly complex mechanics and more dangerous situations. Ubisoft must be aware that having everything available from the start would be a bad idea, so we suspect that we'll see some kind of tiering system applied Marcus' DedSec reputation – unlocking waves of new missions, tasks and content each time a milestone is reached would seemingly be the best way for this to work, encouraging free exploration and personal progress. A similar worry applies to the hacking, too – make it too good and players will simply be able to walk through the game glued to their phones.

"YOU CAN HACK EVERY PERSON WALKING AROUND OR EVEN CHANGE THEIR PROFILE TO MANIPULATE THEM INDIRECTLY"



AOX It seems as though the limited hacking potential of the original game has been greatly expanded on, allowing Marcus to delve deeper into personal details or use the city's high-tech features against it with a few taps on his phone or laptop.

AOX A huge emphasis has been put on redesigning driving model in response to the weightless vehicles of the original *Watch Dogs*. Ubisoft has expressed its desire to make it more responsive, without compromising its accessibility as it introduces new vehicle types.





AOX While *Watch Dogs 2* doesn't feature an accurate, 1:1 depiction of San Francisco, it does feature many of the main hubs in an effort to capture the unique feel and flavour of the city.

potential to falter as it does succeed, but we can't help but been intrigued by the ambition. The more we see of *Watch Dogs 2*, the more we are beginning to question whether it's about to have its own *Assassin's Creed* moment – *ACII* famously surpassed a predecessor that was critically condemned for having big ideas but failing to execute them properly, and it's difficult not to draw the same comparison here.

Player choice permeates the entire experience, extending past the huge breadth of hacking options (and the depth of the manipulation) available. You'll have the ability to shape your own adventure and Ubisoft has already promised that you'll be able to finish the entire game non-lethally should you feel like being the good guy. You can fine-tune Marcus into whatever kind of 'hacktivist' that you want him to be: violent and unforgiving or passive and stealthy, it's up to you.

"Regardless of how [players] play, the game will not judge them, letting them decide how far DedSec is willing to go to take back control," teases Morin. "Players can decide how they approach each situation. They can invest on the skills and tools they want to become either the aggressor, the ghost or the trickster hacker..."

this freedom of action is what characterizes a systemic open world."

Ubisoft Montreal's intention is to drive player choice into the core design of *Watch Dogs 2*'s structure and narrative. It's designed to be 'open' from the start, letting you tackle any mission in any order – you can even shy away from things you aren't interested in entirely as you create your own narrative. There is no set critical path, instead Marcus is completing operations to gain 'followers' in DedSec through notoriety – ultimately, once you've accumulated enough power and presence on the streets you'll be able to push towards the end-game objective.

Watch Dogs 2 is a huge statement of intent for Ubisoft. It's a clear and defiant response to the mountain of criticism directed at the original *Watch Dogs* – one of the best-selling games of the generation so far, in spite of the backlash it generated. Whether the open structure will be engaging enough to keep us hooked throughout remains to be seen, but we can't help but be excited by the prospect of it. *Watch Dogs 2* is aiming to deliver everything we wanted from the original and more – and it's doing it in the most flippant, charming and arrogant fashion imaginable. Which, annoyingly, seems to work.



ETA 26 AUGUST | PUB DEEP SILVER | DEV SNK

The King Of Fighters XIV

Can SNK capitalise on Capcom's weak start with Street Fighter V?



For a while there, things didn't look so good for the next chapter of the *King Of Fighters* series. The initial reveal was genuinely awful

— fans used to the gorgeous sprites of earlier games or the lush hand-drawn characters of the last few releases understandably didn't care for the new (and basic) 3D models, especially since the series has an extremely poor track record when it comes to polygons. But over time, we've all started to warm to the new look. It looks better with each new trailer and seeing the characters in context actually makes it all make sense. It might not do as good a job of pretending to be 2D as the recent *Guilty Gear* games, but that's an unfairly high standard to use as a point of reference — Arc's 3D anime is peerless not just by genre standards but those of the entire medium — and SNK's latest still manages to use animation and effects to stay relatively faithful to its roots, plus those disheartened by *Street Fighter V*'s trickle of new content might be looking for something new. And the more we see of it, the more *KOF XIV* is looking like a genuinely viable alternative.

A 50-strong roster of both returning and original characters (including the incredible King Of Dinosaurs, seemingly a new twist on classic grappler Tizoc) is a strong starting point, with most bases covered both in terms of popular fighters and different styles and disciplines. SNK is typically pretty generous with its modes as well, another area in which it could stand to steal a few points from Capcom. That's not all it's looking to pinch, either. Designer Yasuyuki Oda returns to SNK after a long and successful stint at Dimps working on *Street Fighter IV* — with that and the incredible *Garou: Mark Of The Wolves* on his resume, it's safe to say he's no stranger to making the best fighting games in the business. While we don't yet know whether *King Of Fighters XIV* has what it takes to rub shoulders with such company, it's certainly looking promising, and we won't have to wait long to find out if this could be the year that SNK's team-based fighter might finally find the mainstream success it has deserved for decades.

THE KING OF FIGHTERS XIV is being trained for its next fight by SNK. Find out more here: snkplaymore.co.jp/us/

BEAT THE RUSH

Like many similar games, *XIV* will feature an auto-combo system that lets newcomers pull off decent strings with minimal effort. Please try to learn, though!

KEEP ON MOVIN'

Character models might look a little crude close up but the animation does a great job of helping it still feel like a classic 2D *King Of Fighters* game.

CHANGING IT UP

We're not huge fans of Kyo's new look, if we're honest – in fact, there are a few characters we could say that about. They look way better in motion, though.

SUPERCHARGED

As well as EX specials, there are three different types of super attack that all use this gauge. One, the new Climax Super Special Move, burns the lot!

MAXIMUM

3



ETA Q3 2016 | PUB KONAMI | DEV PES PRODUCTIONS

PES 2017

Building on perfection



There's little question that *Pro Evolution Soccer* is more skilled and technically proficient than *FIFA* on the ball, but is it as much fun? That's

a difficult question to answer, largely because it depends entirely on what you're looking for from your annualised interactive sports. *FIFA* continues to do its best to simulate the spectator sport experience, pumping funds into licensing, corporate branding and player likeness to capture the culture of football. *PES 2017*, on the other hand, is attempting to deliver a more accurate and considered simulation of the sport itself.

Last year's instalment was so good that it was difficult to find any reason to stay away from Konami Stadium; nothing has changed in this respect. *PES 2017* is a confident showing, even on an early playable build. The hundreds of new animations introduced into the game are immediately noticeable, while individual player traits and fluid styles of play are better replicated than before. It's a little overwhelming, seeing players shift their weight as they move the ball between their feet so accurately mimicking the real thing – but it isn't long before you appreciate the nuance to it all, as is so often the case with this series.

To support the new animations, PES Productions has also changed the ways in which you are able to shift around the pitch. Balls no longer latch onto feet as if by magic as passes rocket between players; timing and positioning are key. *PES 2017* is a difficult game and a missed chance or opportunity can quickly turn into a devastating counter-attack. The precise movement and extended control system only serves to make the end result feel all the more satisfying. It's still oh-so-impossibly entertaining to score a goal in *PES*.

It feels like a real triumph to curl a ball in at a tight angle from 30 yards or work a precision one-two through the box, especially as the improved goalkeepers will only usually be beaten by the very

best of shots. What isn't quite so spectacular however, is the action that happens off the pitch. Unless the game gets a significant UI overhaul ahead of its regular September/October launch window, it's likely we will be trapped with another clunky *PES* menu system and another unintuitive player management toolset.

It's a shame because that, coupled with the lack of licences, feels like all it is that's keeping *FIFA* tugging at *PES*'s shirt. As last year's showing demonstrated, *PES* is now more than capable of holding its own against any rival. It has demonstrated unprecedented growth and strength, the return to form the former champ has deserved for some time – it's difficult to imagine that this won't be its best season yet.

“VISUALS HAVE SEEN A MAJOR UPGRADE, OFFERING AUTHENTIC LIKENESSES THANKS TO THE FURTHER INCORPORATION OF THE FOX ENGINE”



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ It's the best-looking *PES* game yet, thanks to *Fox Engine* improvements.
- ◻ New systems add tons of depth and variety to each and every match.
- ✕ Some of the unlicensed team names are really funny.
- Success is more dependent on skill than chance, making it great for multiplayer.



CAMP

LV 6

ONE UP, ONE DOWN

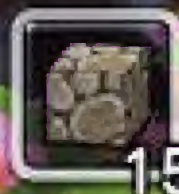
While the controls feel a little fiddly at first, the ability to easily place object one level above or below you is a smart workaround for the third-person viewpoint.

COME TOGETHER

The more you build up your town, the more people you'll attract. Build them a house and they might stay, eventually maybe helping you out in return.

HACK AND SLASH

Several active items can be quickly switched between, allowing an easy flow between gathering, building and combat and no room for nasty surprises!





...AND BEYOND!

You quest for rare resources may take you far beyond the comfort of your homestead. Just try to get home before it gets dark – that's when bad things happen.

ETA OCTOBER | DEV SQUARE ENIX | PUB IN-HOUSE

Dragon Quest Builders

"Waiter, there appears to be some Minecraft in my JRPG..."



It's impossible to look at *Dragon Quest Builders* and not see *Minecraft*'s fingerprints all over it. That

Square should be looking to cash in on the most lucrative indie game of all time isn't all that surprising, but the fact that this series has discovered a built-in canon explanation for such a seemingly weird crossover is undeniably impressive. You see, the original *Dragon Quest* offered players a choice in its final furlong – carry on being the Goody Two-Shoes hero and vanquish the antagonist, or join forces and help him build a new world. Riffing off the latter option, *Dragon Quest Builders* sees your character waking up from a dream/coma/nap/whatever/videogames to find that the whole world is now made out of blocks that can be manipulated at will. Only you have this power, mind – the people you meet have been reconditioned to fundamentally not understand the creative process, a terrifying prospect and one we won't dwell on for too long lest we end up rocking back and forth in a corner somewhere. They can be later taught some degree of creative skill, so that's something.

Depending on your view of *Minecraft*, *DQB* (as all the cool kids are calling it) has clear strengths and/or weaknesses. The freedom of the indie sensation is lost somewhat when you're asked to build houses in keeping with specific blueprints, although this could be spun as a positive for those who didn't buy into *Minecraft*'s seemingly directionless structure. Assuming the features of the Japanese release will make it across the pond intact, the full game should offer a free mode after a certain point in the story, meaning that creative visionaries needn't worry about being constrained. But for story purposes, you may find that you need to shelf the 'creative vision' and just build what you're told. That said, having a clear goal to work towards and accomplish is more in line with traditional JRPG progression, so running off to find the right monsters to slay in order to tick ingredients off a list will most likely work for a lot of people, especially fans of the genre who have been doing stuff like that for years.

DRAGON QUEST BUILDERS is being put together brick by brick by a team more used to making traditional RPGs. Find out more: dragonquest-game.com/builders



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ GT is the biggest exclusive on PlayStation, having shifted over 70 million units.
- Driveclub is in need of some decent competition – this'll do nicely.
- ✕ Online integration means you'll always have something or someone to beat.
- It could be your gateway into real life motor racing, thanks to FIA involvement.



BETA BEST FORGOTTEN

When *Gran Turismo Sport* was originally announced last year, it was suggested that a beta test for the game would kick off early in 2016. Now, with the game being given a November release date, Polyphony has decided to back out of the beta plan. According to game's creator and Polyphony CEO Kazunori Yamauchi, not having to develop a gold master of the game for beta testing its online components saves the team around three months of additional development time.



△×□ A livery editor is included with *GT Sport*, largely to help competitive players and teams create brands and identities for themselves. It will be interesting to see what artistic experts will be able to do with it, too.

ETA 18 NOVEMBER 2016 | PUB SONY | DEV POLYPHONYDIGITAL

Gran Turismo Sport

Not one for the Sunday drivers



A great *Gran Turismo* experience can take you to a Zen place. You enter into a trance of driving perfection, engulfed by the precision and

beauty of the game, lulled by the familiar curves and rhythms of the circuits, and drawn in by its demand for total concentration. You are at once totally focused and clear of thought. If *GT Sport* is changing anything about this in particular, it's that it is perhaps moving away a little from the meditative driving fan and leaning towards its hardcore, competitive block.

That's why this is *Gran Turismo Sport* rather than *Gran Turismo 7* and not an in-between *Prologue* game either. This is a full release with 137 exotic vehicles, 19 locations and 37 track variants. Classic circuits like Willow Springs, Brands Hatch and the Nordschleife return along with new tests for your driving skill in the Northern Isle Speedway and Tokyo street circuit.

But as we say, the focus here is online, as competition is being put at the heart of the game. A calendar of scheduled online events is front and centre of the landing page as you start the game, inviting you to take part in what promises to be some of the fiercest online racing

of the generation. Why? Because this actually has something up for grabs that gearheads can really appreciate. As if doubling down on the incredible stories of *GT* players making it as professional race car drivers, the Nation's Cup and Manufacturer's Cup tournaments in the game could earn you a real-world FIA license that will allow you to drive at motor clubs in Spain, China and the UK. 22 automobile bodies recognise the license and it once again ties the *GT* experience deeply into people's real love of cars and driving.

It's also an example of why this game might not be for the casual *GT* appreciator, but if online isn't your thing then there are other additions to this game that might appeal. For instance, off the starting grid you have the new Scapes mode, which is *GT*'s very own photo mode with a twist. Rather than capturing stills from the middle of racing events or taking snaps of your favourite cars in a garage situation, you can pick from 1,000 different background images and place your car into them. It's a fully 3D, rendered environment allowing you to move the cars around the landscape where they will scale and rotate as appropriate, casting shadows and light from the headlights as they should. Watching it

in action beggars belief. It's like watching a real-time 3D rendering program Photoshop objects together. And it all outputs to images at 4K, which is pretty impressive too.

Which segues us nicely to *Gran Turismo Sport*'s graphics – always an important element of conversation for this series. As it happens, it's not always immediately obvious how much has really been improved here. This is in part because *GT6* was stunning on PS3 and an incredible achievement for that piece of hardware. It also doesn't help that *Project Cars* and *Driveclub* have already proven impressive this generation. However, the use of real-time shadow and lighting effects in *GT Sport* looks even more dynamic than we've seen elsewhere, as does the way that smoke and dust hang in the air after mishaps on the track. With frontline graphics being of a high standard as a matter of course, it's the smaller details that shine through. Certainly the images from Scapes look incredible and the rest of the game isn't up to this lofty standard, but it's by no means shabby.

GRAN TURISMO SPORT is making good progress through its gruelling License Tests. Follow its progress here: gran-turismo.com

AOX The game's Nation's Cup will look to find the best drivers in each region in a World Cup-style format, while the Manufacturer's Cup finds the best drivers of Mercedes, BMWs and so on to compete for the top prize.



"THIS GAME MIGHT NOT BE FOR THE CASUAL GT APPRECIATOR"



INJUSTICE 2

WHICH HERO ARE YOU HOLDING OUT FOR?



 **twitter**
twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

#Injustice2 Wants: STATIC
SHOCK! Starfire. Cheetah. Black
Manta. BRAINIAC.
@FFJUSTICE

13:28pm and @noobde still
hasnt announced Poison Ivy as
new character in #Injustice2.
Sometimes it seems like a lost
battle, I'll keep posted
@AERO_QUINNO

I want Constantine and Black
Canary in #Injustice2 so bad
@HAYTHAMFANGIRL

Hopefully they add Zoom or
Reverse Flash too! Clay Face
would be cool too!
@LASTRESPAWN

5 new characters I'd love in
#Injustice2: Captain Atom, Dr
Fate, Captain Cold, Black Manta,
Blue Beetle
@IAMSIMONCOLTON

BRAINIAC, Darkseid and Mr
Freeze but don't forget SHAZAM,
he needs to be in the game again!
@MAKGSNAKE

@InjusticeGame please add
either John Constantine or The
Scarecrow to #Injustice2
@THEBATMANFAN200

would be nice to see black
canary finally join the roster of
#injustice2
@MASTER_FREEZY

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OVER THE TOP

DICE EXPLAINS WHY THE FIRST WORLD WAR IS A PERFECT FIT
FOR ITS BOLD NEW DIRECTION WITH BATTLEFIELD 1

WORLD WAR ONE ISN'T THE PERIOD WE MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN TO PLAY HOST TO A FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER. It's not exactly an obvious choice. Developer DICE has, of course, been dismissive of that fact from the moment it unveiled *Battlefield 1*, an all-new FPS designed to celebrate 'the beautiful chaos of all-out war'.

It's certainly evocative, designed in such a way that it could easily leave you hailing it as a turning point for the genre. But you've a right to be wary of the premise, because the gameplay demands of a fast-paced, team-based shooter – one with an emphasis on vehicular combat – seems to be inherently at odds with a setting that is most commonly associated with attrition.

When you think of the Great War, it's likely to conjure images of devastating operational paralysis, of battles on the Western Front and the implementation of ineffectual trench warfare. Technology played a huge part in this war; the horror of chemical warfare still resonates in public consciousness today, while dangerous working conditions would prove to be as deadly as the arrival of tanks, biplanes and battleships. On the surface, then, none of this sounds right for a big-budget blockbuster action game.

It's difficult to see where the "fun" side of WWI could emerge, especially one that needs to fit the remit of a 64-player shooter. The FPS genre traditionally looks to empower the player by offering them an immediate sense of progress and clear escalation of power. In this respect, WWI presents a number of problems for the designer doing »





“IT DOESN'T REALLY LOOK LIKE WWI, DOES IT? IT LOOKS MORE LIKE BATTLEFIELD: MAD MAX”

THINK YOU CAN SINK THIS BATTLESHIP?

ANATOMY OF THE HMS IRON DUKE

■ The dreadnaught-class HMS Iron Duke is one of the largest vehicles ever created in Battlefield's virtual spaces, it's going to take a co-ordinated effort to sink this battleship.



IMPOSING DESIGN

At 622ft in length, the Iron Duke was one of the first dreadnaught-class ships in service and it became the envy of every superpower.

TOUGH BREAKS

DICE has only teased what it'll take to bring this ship down, but it sounds like multiple runs from bomber planes and artillery will be required.

ON DECK

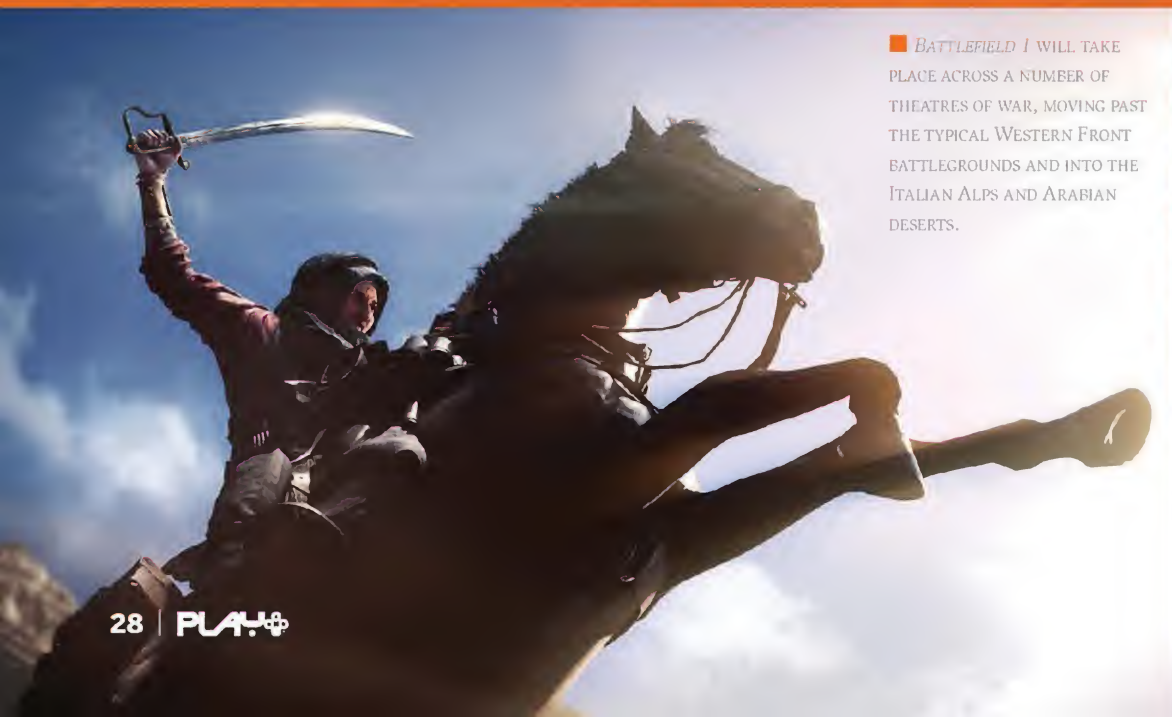
It'll take multiple soldiers to actually get this ship working at full capacity, with extra hands needed to man the cannons.

TOTAL DESTRUCTION

Should you get the HMS Iron Duke close enough to the coast, it is capable of wiping out entire sections of the map thanks to DICE's new destruction engine.

IMPOSSIBLE FIREPOWER

Iron Duke is armed with a battery of ten BL 13.5-inch Mk V naval guns, as well as smaller secondary battery designed to take on ships and low-flying aircrafts.



■ BATTLEFIELD 1 WILL TAKE PLACE ACROSS A NUMBER OF THEATRES OF WAR, MOVING PAST THE TYPICAL WESTERN FRONT BATTLEFIELDS AND INTO THE ITALIAN ALPS AND ARABIAN DESERTS.



their best to craft escapism, especially for an audience that's potentially more interested in killstreaks and progression systems than it is the Somme and Flanders.

By going back to 1914, DICE will need to either walk away from building digital conflicts around authenticity or prepare to have questions asked of its intentions. Clearly, *Battlefield 1* is taking liberties with historical accuracy in an effort to build a sense of perceived realism. That is to say that while DICE will be making use of the war's weaponry, uniforms and theatres of war, it's aiming to extract those elements out of their gritty context and push them into a 'safe for play' environment. The studio is eager to engage us in the "genesis of modern warfare" and it wants to do it as far removed from any responsibility to the history it is drawing from as possible.

—OVER THE TOP—

"I think there's no question that WWI was one of the bloodiest conflicts ever fought, it was the dawn of all out war – where the old world meets the new one, it was crazy," considered Andreas Morell, *Battlefield 1*'s multiplayer producer, in a recent interview with *games™ magazine*. And indeed it was "crazy"; it was a conflict that saw the tactics of the 19th Century clash violently with the emerging technologies of the 20th to great loss.

A shooter that makes any valiant attempt to be faithful to the realities of WWI would be slow, tactically dense and unquestionably claustrophobic. You'd expect a game making use of the locales, assets and technological horrors of the war for entertainment purposes to be more *Silent Hill* than a bombastic shooter; this is the reality of the setting chosen by DICE, but it doesn't fit with the mechanical language of *Battlefield*. It begs the questions: why this era?

Perhaps it is because DICE has reached an impasse of sorts with *Battlefield*. In the fourteen years since the franchise first debuted with *Battlefield 1942*, the series has served multiple tours of duty in WWII, trudged through Vietnam, investigated modern conflicts and even taken a short trip into the future. It even took on America's relentless war on drugs with *Hardline*; it perhaps wouldn't be unfair to suggest that the series has arrived in 1914 out of necessity rather than curiosity.

The developers at DICE are quickly running out of conflicts that would appropriately service the scale and scope of *Battlefield*'s traditional gameplay loop, and judging by the volatile reaction to Activision's *Call Of Duty: Infinite Warfare*, dusting off the history books for inspiration seems like a wise decision. Not only does the setting immediately set *Battlefield* apart from the slew of shiny, space-set first-person shooters arriving in the next 12 months, it also helps separate it from EA's own *Star Wars: Battlefront* and *Titanfall 2*.

"We are taking a different route from the other [FPS] games," says Morell. "Going back to the dawn of all-out warfare really is a perfect fit for *Battlefield*. The epic scale, the immersion we can [provide], the journey that we can show our players, the universe that existed back then... you're going to go to places that you wouldn't even believe [soldiers] were fighting. It's the classic *Battlefield* multiplayer sandbox at its best... it's going to give you all of those 'only in *Battlefield* moments' that are so unique and spectacular."



And yet we're still curious about *Battlefield 1*'s use of the Great War as a backdrop for its chaos – it could quite easily have used an alternate history setting to realise its gameplay intentions – but Morell isn't wrong: *Battlefield 1* does look spectacular. In spite of being over a century removed from its competition in setting, *Battlefield 1* looks more modern than its FPS rivals. There's something almost otherworldly to its visual design, as if the soldiers and the war that surrounds them had been summoned from a fantastical *Elseworlds* story. But they aren't, they are echoes of a real world 1914 draped in *Battlefield*'s evocative oranges and blues – elements of an old war transformed into something fresh-faced and immediate.

■ ZEPPELINS WERE A SHOW OF FORCE IN WORLD WAR I. WHILE THEY LACKED SOLID OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES, THEY SWIFTLY CRUSHED MORALE. THE SAME GOES IN *BATTLEFIELD 1*; THE LAST THING YOU'LL LIKELY WANT TO SEE IS A ZEPPELIN APPEARING ON THE HORIZON AS YOU'RE TRYING TO SECURE AN OBJECTIVE.

—BATTLEFIELD IN ACTION—

"The misconceptions around this era is that [WWI] was just set on the Western Front in trenches – fighting with ancient equipment – but when you really start digging into it you find that that is so not true," explains Morell. "It's a really interesting era for us. Everybody over here at DICE has gone on a journey to understand what this [setting] means for *Battlefield*. The more we got into our research over the years, the more we realised that this is the perfect fit."

"Especially with multiplayer, we are going to really show off this truly global war with all the different locations that we have – from the high Alps of Italy and of course the Western Front. And then there's the weaponry, they had shotguns, they had automatic rifles, and they had pistols and bolt-action sniper rifles. The things that you see on the battlefield from 1914 to 1918 are essentially the first iteration of what has been used in combat even today; this is where it all started," he says, adding, "ultimately it's all there. We want to portray it accurately but ultimately it's a game. It needs to be *Battlefield* and it needs to fit all the pillars that all our fans know and love."

Battlefield 1 does look pretty incredible, even at this early pre-alpha stage. The scale is truly impressive; the action stretches off far into the distance, a testament to the skill developers now exhibit over the current generation technology. The moment-to-moment action is visceral and chaotic. *Battlefield 1* seems to combine the speed of *Battlefield Hardline* with the scale and precision »

CLASS WARFARE

HOW ROLES ARE CHANGING IN BATTLEFIELD 1

ASSAULT

The fiercest action has always been on the frontlines in *Battlefield* and that's no different here. The Assault kit comes equipped anti-vehicle weaponry and explosives designed to aid you in disabling enemy armour and disrupting defensive lines.

MEDIC

Those with a penchant for healing and reviving their brothers in arms will want to take up the role of Medic, which has been separated from the Assault kit – the first time this has happened since *Bad Company 2*.

SUPPORT

Suppression and flank tactics are more integral than ever in the larger spaces of *Battlefield 1*'s theatres of war. The Support kit lets a soldier have access to light machine guns and gives them the opportunity to resupply ammunition.

SCOUT

With an emphasis on destructible landscapes and trench warfare, engaging enemies at long range will be in high demand. The Scout kit will give you plenty of opportunities to prove that camping is a legitimate strategy.

TANK OFFICER

Vehicle classes are a new addition to *Battlefield* and, with the Engineer kit cut from the experience entirely, it's likely this new role will give you the ability to repair ordnance should it become damaged in an assault.

PILOT

DICE is yet to detail this second vehicle class, but given that some of the most infamous stories of World War I centred around the exploits of pilots, it's likely this Kit will improve your manoeuvrability and tenacity in the air.



"WE AREN'T DEPICTING THE HORRENDOUS WAR STORIES. IT'S AN ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCT, WE ARE MAKING A GAME"

of *Battlefield 4* – the unhinged destructibility of *Bad Company 2* there to sweeten the deal. *Battlefield 1* is still structured around the "rock-paper-scissors" balance that franchise is known for, where victory is reserved for those who assess the opportunities at hand to take on threats across land, air and sea. Considering the size and variety of the battlefields, DICE wants us to start thinking about how we operate in battle at a macro level. Simply linking up with a Squad and playing the objective isn't enough any more; instead you need to be aware of your surroundings and switch classes dutifully to assist with the frontline surge.

The Engineer class from *Battlefield 3* and *4* is gone, their equipment split between Assault and Support – it would have been a little anachronistic for the setting to see a soldier running around with a carbine in one hand and a rocket launcher in the other. The dedicated Medic class has been reintroduced; those with a penchant for supportive healing will finally have an opportunity to gain a foothold on the leaderboards. Dedicated vehicle classes are being introduced for the first time and, from what we've seen behind closed doors, this will impact your survivability while in the driver or gunner seats of everything from heavy tanks to aerial bombers.

Some tanks will be suitable for multiple passengers – who are needed to control the fixed main or side guns depending on the model you hop into – while certain aerial

vehicles will require a gunner to take charge of the old MG bolted on to the back of it. We've already seen gorgeous red triplanes twirl and dip through the air (with far more manoeuvrability than their real-life counterparts), drawing parallels with the Red Baron and his famous Flying Circus squadron fighting over the Western Front back in 1917. Air combat looks quick; surprisingly so, in fact, as you consider that your average Bristol F.2 Fighter would top out at 125mph – a sharp departure from the blistering 1,180mph that you're used to experiencing from *Battlefield 4*'s F35.

On the seas, we've even witnessed a Dreadnaught Class HMS Iron Duke battleship – the crown jewel of the Royal Navy – laying waste to shorelines. While the studio wouldn't budge on the implications of such large vehicles – the largest it has ever created – it will clearly have an impact on the development of the environments around you. Whether *Battlefield 1* would include Levolution – destruction wrenched from the player's hands directly – or whether it would return to *Bad Company*'s 'destroy-what-you-want' insanity seems up in the air. Though a tester mentioned at a behind-closed doors presentation that *Battlefield 1* in its current state featured 'too much destruction' and needs to be tweaked ahead of launch as the maps transformed into coverless death traps by the end of rounds. We'd wager that DICE is leaning towards the *Bad Company* model then, which is fine by us in terms of gameplay.



HISTORICAL ACCURACY

In short, we've never quite seen a World War-set shooter look quite this good, or – dare we say it – this *modern*. That of course shines a light on an array of problems with the concept and subsequent execution. *Battlefield 1* is taking sweeping creative liberties with the era it's set in, to the point where the longer you explore it, the less it resembles the battles it is drawing inspiration from. *Battlefield 1* might use the right gun names and sounds, but it's really looking to replicate the surface elements of the conflict it is drawing its identity from, not the atmosphere or reality of it. That probably wouldn't be much fun.

"It doesn't really look like WWI, does it?" laughs historian and author Rob Schäfer as we ask for his initial thoughts on the game. As an expert on German warfare through the First and Second World Wars (not to mention a fan of the *Battlefield* franchise), we were eager to get his perspective. "It looks more like *Battlefield: Mad Max*."

"*Battlefield* can work [in WWI] yes, but at the cost of historical accuracy," he considered as we discussed authenticity, or the lack thereof. "I think we will have massively fast Mark IV tanks, we will have lots of spades, axes and clubs, and everyone seems to be wearing trench armour from what I saw in the trailer. But yes, why not?" he says, adding, "I just hope that it will be a bit slower than the previous games... [otherwise] it won't be a World War One shooter."

Schäfer points out a number of issues. While *Battlefield* may have prided itself on replicating weapons and attachments in previous instalments, it doesn't sound possible here. "I don't think [weapons] will handle like the originals though, because it will be a *massively* slow game," he says, while also noting that the traditional progression system will either need to change dramatically or betray the era. "I'm also quite interested to see what they do if there is an upgrade or reward system, what do you get? There are no improvements, so I just wonder what it will be like – there isn't a huge choice of automatic weapons."

A real sticking point for Schäfer, though, was the thought of "hordes of players wearing trench armour and wielding clubs and axes," which surprised us, as DICE has also put a strong emphasis in its early promotional campaign on its revised melee system to better echo the combat of the time. Melee weapons weren't as widespread, Schäfer asserts, as we may have been led to believe.

"In the German army [trench clubs] were first issued to very specialised assault troops from 1917 onwards. Even daggers were hardly seen; in the German army only two were issued per company, so you only had two proper close-combat daggers issued between 150 men," he says, also noting that many of the armour variations in the trailer would have been ineffectual in actual combat. "The stuff »

■ IF YOU WERE CONCERNED THAT DICE WAS STILL CHASING THE GHOST OF *MODERN WARFARE*'S SUCCESS, YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO LEARN IT'S PUTTING ALL OF ITS FOCUS ON ALL-OUT WAR.

existed, but it wasn't used as it is depicted here... stuff like [the armour and melee weapons] is a bit, well it might look cool but it certainly didn't happen."

To DICE's credit, it does seem to be aware of these historical inaccuracies in *Battlefield 1*, but when pushed on how the studio is going to make authenticity work for the game, Morell has much the same answer as he did when we questioned the appropriateness of using the conflict in the first place: "The way we approached it is if it adds to the game – and it makes the game better – then it should go in there. It's *Battlefield* and it's a game first." That's largely true, and it's a fine-looking game at that, but if DICE is ignoring some of the realities of WWI combat, then why did it select it for *Battlefield*?

RAISING LARGER QUESTIONS

Most shooters aren't interested in telling serious war stories – nor should they have to be. Most developers can create entertainment-driven experiences that rely on the horrors of war without actually depicting them, and a game set in this period was always going to overlook elements such as trench warfare out of necessity. What DICE is doing with *Battlefield 1* isn't wrong, necessarily; as a multiplayer game it requires large-scale, explosive battles. But there's something unsettling about DICE grabbing the imagery of WWI and leaving the rest behind, that it might not acknowledge the sensitive scenarios it has chosen to display.

When questioned as to whether players will be able to wield chemical weapons (as glimpsed in early footage) as grenades, Morell would only say "at this stage we aren't going to go into specific items and gadgets." When questioned directly about whether it was appropriate to set a game in WWI the response was limited. "It's a game," Morell says, again. "We aren't depicting the horrendous war stories... It's an entertainment product, we are making a game."

That's true, of course, but chemical weapons – such as chlorine and mustard gas – are one of the true horror stories of the last century. Are we, perhaps, being too sensitive?

To answer this, we have to turn back to our history expert, who understands the reality of this conflict better than us or DICE. "Looking at it from our perspective today, it is definitely nothing that should be done today. But these games are about 'killing', so I personally see no difference if you vaporise someone with a panzerfaust or if you gas him," says Schäfer. "It appears to us that it was horrible – and it obviously was, people suffered and were in terrible pain – but only a very tiny number of soldiers died from gas. Gas had a huge psychological effect, but the main killer in World War 1 was artillery. About 80 per cent of the casualties on the battlefield were inflicted by artillery: shrapnel, splinters, high explosives." And it's true, the killing capacity of gas is thought to have been limited to less than four percent of combat deaths before it was banned. This is a perception that will carry on until people are more educated, and perhaps *Battlefield 1*, in its way, can open up a dialogue about the subject for a new generation. The use of chemical weapons is an iconic piece of WWI history – "if you have the First World War, you can hardly have it without poison gas," says Schäfer.

"PEOPLE SUFFERED AND WERE IN TERRIBLE PAIN – BUT ONLY A VERY TINY NUMBER OF SOLDIERS DIED FROM GAS"

WWII has been largely appropriated, deemed acceptable, as a setting for all manner of videogames – shooters such as *Call Of Duty* and *Brothers In Arms* alongside action-adventures like *The Saboteur* – but even they know and accept their limitations in terms of material to draw from. Look back to 2014's *Wolfenstein: The New Order*, a game that took its ridiculous action to an alternative history where Nazis won the war, it drew considerable criticism over its handling of holocaust imagery – whether it even belonged in the game to begin with is still argued to this day.

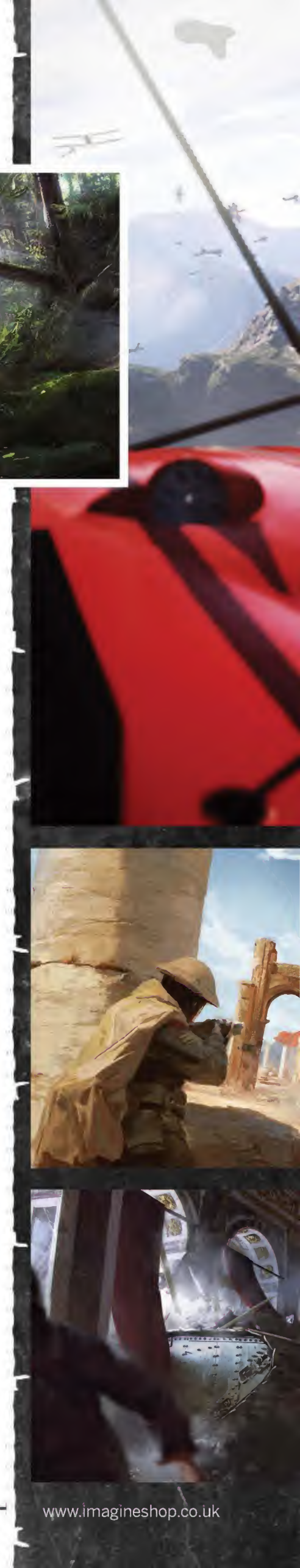
Many aspects of WWII have been simplified and (in some examples) trivialised by Hollywood and videogames.

We fight the good fight alongside allies, we defeat the evil Nazis, and return home a hero; that's your classic WWII story – it's become a playground for videogame action. WWI hasn't been given this treatment. It fails to offer a clear-cut narrative of heroes and villains, instead its driving force is focused around a complex mess of old-world

alliances struggling to adapt to the 20th Century.

Ultimately, *Battlefield 1*'s gameplay looks exhilarating and vibrant, but it's set in and around a war of exhaustion. The deadlock that we saw in 1914-18 has been punctured by sizzling dogfights and an array of improved replica weaponry that betrays reality. *Battlefield 1* takes advantage of the imagery of WWI – the guns, the soldiers and the settings – but can/should it capture the darker side?

The First World War retains a strange position in the public consciousness, and that means *Battlefield 1* has raised some larger questions of the use of war as entertainment in videogames. For the most part, WWI has avoided interactive recreation – aside from a handful of flight simulators and turn-based tactical war games – and the success of *Battlefield 1* would likely bring about a change in that. If it's playing fast and loose with the realities of the conflict, it loses the opportunity to educate, which would be a great shame. Still, if the thought of DICE letting players run riot through some of the bloodiest warzones in human history makes you uncomfortable, it may be worth asking yourself: considering the talent and energy in the team at DICE right now, is there a development team you would trust more to bring this war to life? DICE has given itself a challenge, but one it can rise to.





■ EVERY FOKKER DR.I WE'VE SEEN IN FLIGHT SEEMS TO BE COATED IN BRIGHT PAINT, THE VISUAL IDENTIFIER OF THE RED BARON AND HIS FLYING CIRCUS SQUADRON. DICE WOULDN'T CONFIRM WHETHER MANFRED VON RICHTHOFEN WOULD MAKE AN APPEARANCE OR WHETHER IT'S JUST CREATIVELY CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF THE WESTERN FRONT.



CAN BATTLEFIELD 1 EDUCATE US?

THE FIRST WORLD War isn't covered by media and educators in the same depth that would typically be applied to the conflicts that would soon follow. But we learn about the past in strange and different ways, and *Battlefield 1* is an opportunity to open up a side of history to an audience that is likely more interested in interactive experiences than it is sitting down with the collective works of Erich Remarque, Wilfred Owen, R.C. Sherriff and Ernest Hemingway.

"What I also like about *Battlefield 1* is that it gives you this perspective of global warfare," Rob Schäfer tells us as the historian digests the early footage. "Which is nice in a way because it may also prove to be a bit educational; so people know that the First World War wasn't just France, or Flanders or the Somme. It goes to Russia, the Middle-East, and Egypt."

We've questioned the appropriateness of *Battlefield 1* and

judging by the community feedback we've gathered it seems a lot of you also feel uneasy about the premise. But for Schäfer, a German historian, he questions whether this is in fact a reflection of Britain's cultural perception of the Great War.

"I find the debate that is currently raging in England very interesting," says Schäfer, noting that he has spoken with many of his colleagues across Europe to get their take on *Battlefield 1*. "I think the reason you might be questioning the appropriateness is because WWI is the British national catastrophe. It is not the German national catastrophe, nor is it the Russian, the Dutch or the Belgian national catastrophe. I think people in Britain still very much feel and identify with the fallout of the First World War. One of the major reasons for that is that, in the last 20 years, it has been heavily romanticised."

And it's true, to a degree. As Schäfer puts it, the war is

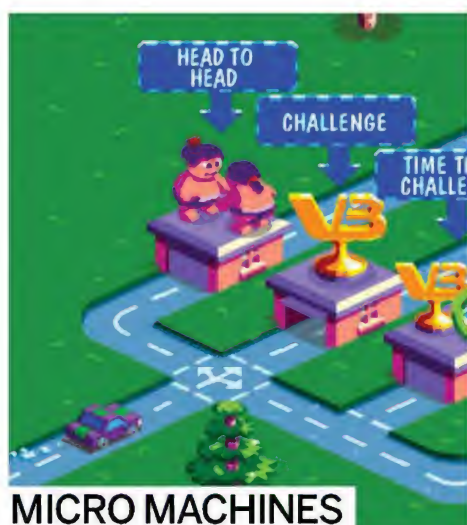
remembered through "the relentless poetry and 'those brave boys going over the top to fight for our freedom' and stuff like that." A lot of our understanding of that war, at a general level, is through these storytellers, a lot of which skews the facts. To his credit, he doesn't "have a problem with the morale of it all... personally, I do not see any difference if I shoot digital Vietcong or digital Waffen-SS."

We are right to question the appropriateness of course, WWI is an odd setting for such an explosive and bombastic videogame. But it's worth remembering that WWI is, compared to WWII, a relative mystery to many, and it's important to educate yourself on the conflict before writing the game off entirely. As Schäfer says, "Personally, I think that if there is a chance that it can get young people interested in that period of history I'm perfectly fine with it," and we're inclined to agree.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ TEN OF THE BEST ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ WACKY RACERS

A FEW ALTERNATIVE RACING GAMES FOR THOSE BORED OF REGULAR CARS...



MICRO MACHINES

■ **OKAY, SO MOST** of the vehicles in Codemasters' classic miniaturised racer are still cars. But here, it's the tracks that make it feel different to your standard racing game. Pool tables, workbenches, bathroom surfaces... anywhere you could play with the actual toy cars, you can race in the games. V3 on PSone was damn good, but Mega Drive version, *Micro Machines 2*, is basically the best thing ever.



SWITCH GALAXY ULTRA

■ **A TIME TRIAL** racer rather than a directly competitive one, this indie hit does occasionally feature other vehicles but only as obstacles. Speaking of which, there are *a lot* of obstacles in this game and screaming along at an eye-searing rate as it does, you'll need lightning reactions to dodge the lot and set record times. It starts out quite simple and all you need to do is switch lanes to avoid stuff, but numerous gimmicks come into play as you progress – from teleporters and ramps that let you skip sections to keys that allow you to destroy certain coloured barriers – and it gets all kinds of hectic by the later levels.



LONDON 2012

■ **INTERCHANGEABLE WITH MORE** or less any other athletics game, *London 2012* and its ilk do away with the easy mode 'hold R2' acceleration of boring old cars to make you work for your speed, be it by mashing buttons

or wagging analog sticks frantically. The result (aside from the odd broken controller) is that events get especially competitive in local multiplayer sessions. For extra laughs, grab an old dance mat and run on the spot.



HYDRO THUNDER

■ **MIDWAY'S ARCADE RACER** was awesome in the arcades and the Dreamcast port was even better, which just made it all the more galling that the PSone version wasn't quite as good. Still, there's a way around that. *Midway Arcade Treasures 3*, released on PS2, used the Dreamcast version of the game, so pick that up if you fancy riding some colourful waves.

SPLIT/SECOND

■ **IT'S ALWAYS SAD** to see studios close after great games that don't do the numbers the publishers were hoping for, and that's exactly what happened here. Black Rock – who also gave us the equally awesome *Pure* – did an awesome job of fusing circuit racing with a kind of game show element where races were staged for entertainment and crazy environmental hazards brought into play to keep viewer levels up. If you never played it, you're missing out – there aren't all that many games where you can steal first place while screeching around a crashing jet plane, after all.



CRASH TEAM RACING

■ **THE UNLIKELY FACE** of PlayStation, Crash Bandicoot was only three games old when he got his driving licence. Having already gone toe-to-toe with Mario in the battle of the 3D platformers, Naughty Dog was bold indeed to step onto another patch of Nintendo-dominated turf with this cartoon kart racer. But the risk paid off – *Crash Team Racing* was really bloody good. Offering clever shortcuts, all kinds of collectibles, a brilliant hub-based structure and tight gameplay (as well as a multiplayer mode that holds up remarkably well), many would go as far as to say that they prefer it to *Mario Kart 64*.



SSX

■ **CRAZY TRICKS AND** death-defying stunts might be the focus of the later *SSX* games, but it wasn't always like that. No, the original game was pretty much a downhill racing game that offered tricks as an optional extra in most events, and that approach has popped up again in more recent iterations in the form of race-specific modes and events. The over-the-top courses for which the franchise is known lend themselves brilliantly to competitive racing, with branching routes allowing the daring to shave seconds off their times in exchange for a little extra danger along the way.



CHOCOBO RACING

■ **THE FINAL FANTASY** series isn't exactly short of spin-offs, but this has to be one of the weirdest. *Super Mario Kart* had been huge for Nintendo, spawning a raft of imitators that weren't as good – for some reason, Square decided to join that club by having a bunch of random characters plucked from *FF* canon take to the track. It didn't work out so well and the game was almost universally panned, so don't expect to ever see a sequel.




CRAZY TAXI

■ **YOU'LL NOTICE THAT** the intro specifies 'regular' cars, so we're pretty sure featuring games based on crazy ones is fine, right? Good. Sega's arcade smash is another time attack affair, rewarding speedy passenger deliveries with more cash (read: points) and making learning the best routes around the city vital. It's also worth noting that the ace soundtrack was changed for the recent re-releases, so plump for the PS2 version if you have the means to play it.



X-TREME EXPRESS

■ **WE'VE SAVED THE** best for last here, as this one is so ridiculous that we still can't believe it actually exists. This train racing game (yes, really) came out over here as a budget PS2 release and it's as bonkers as you might expect, demanding careful weight management to avoid derailling on tough corners. "Your train melts if you try to finish the race at a platform that another racer has already stopped at," Retro Gamer's Nick Thorpe informs us. Sold.



"THIS IS A SHOOTER
THAT RUNS AT A FRANTIC
PACE, WITH ITS LAYERS OF
COMPLEXITY EMERGING
ONE AFTER ANOTHER THE
LONGER YOU PLAY"



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Blizzard

DEVELOPER
In-house

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-12

INSTALL SIZE
54GB

AGE RATING
12+

TWITTER
@PlayOverwatch

Overwatch

A league of its own



Overwatch succeeds and surprises on so many levels that it's actually a little embarrassing.

Embarrassing not only for the myriad developers currently working on first-person shooters – *Overwatch* exhibits a degree of technical excellence that will be desperately sought after in the years that follow, though ultimately difficult to replicate – but for Blizzard, too. The studio has once again sauntered out of its comfort zone and manufactured magic out of madness. But it falls short of perfection by thinking it could exorcise the curse *Modern Warfare* has left hanging over the multiplayer shooter space.

Overwatch feels like the game Blizzard has been building towards for a decade, a continuation of the design philosophy that gave us the likes of *Hearthstone* and *Heroes Of The Storm* – smaller projects that are easier to support and quicker to enhance with new content than, say, the *Diablo* or *Warcraft* franchises. The result is a focused

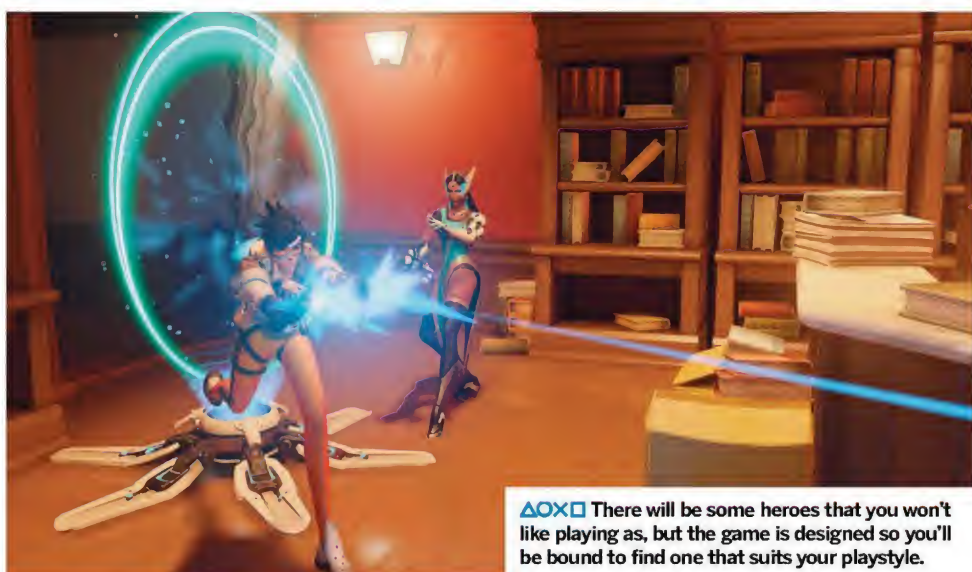
multiplayer shooter that, admittedly, doesn't strive to do an awful lot in the space it occupies but what it does tackle, it does pretty damned impressively.

It would be easy to write *Overwatch* off due to its implied simplicity. At first glance, its multiplayer action seems to live exclusively in the shadow of *Team Fortress 2*. Two teams of six vie for control over objectives points and strategic positions. The art style is distinctive, its class roles clearly defined and each one of its heroes comes with a clear personality – so much so that it feels like they could each be the star of their own IP. But *Overwatch* is deceiving in this respect. While it may look simple on the surface, it is anything but. It's an exercise in creative chaos, a game as fun as it is demanding of your commitment and patience.

This is a shooter that runs at a frantic pace, with its layers of complexity emerging one after another the longer you play. It puts emphasis on class synergy and cooperation, matches changing drastically depending on

what hero you choose and what role you assume within a shifting balancing act. Lone wolves die quickly; *Overwatch* is designed in such a way that it forces constant clashes between a wide variety of heroes. Assuming control of the correct hero (within the context of team compositions) is integral to finding overall success and personal satisfaction.

At its heart, *Overwatch* is a character-based shooter. While it may feature four basic classes of Offence, Defence, Tank and Support, no two characters within each bracket function in a similar way. Mercy and Lucio may both be healers, but where one uses angel wings to quickly zip across large distances to provide focused health and damage buffs, the other feels like he's been ripped straight from the set of *Jet Set Radio*; skating around the map fluidly, utilising infectious grooves to keep players up on their feet. McCree and Reaper may both wield dual hand-cannons, but neither moves or fires like the other. This clear definition extends across every single one of *Overwatch*'s 21



△OX□ There will be some heroes that you won't like playing as, but the game is designed so you'll be bound to find one that suits your playstyle.



playable heroes, and it's your selection – and how it aids the overall team synergy – that defines the pace and outcome of the action.

While many of the characters are entirely unique, there are some that fit into familiar shooter archetypes. Some display the arena shooter sensibilities of Unreal Tournament's avatars, while others are able to lean comfortably on the fluidity and gameplay loops exhibited by *Titanfall*. There's the typical military grunt, Soldier 76, who serves as a gateway for players more accustomed to the speed of *Call Of Duty*, but then there's also the hyper-intelligent gorilla, Winston, waiting for whenever you're ready to try something with a larger emphasis on mobility and melee brutality.

There's a great thrill to be found in making these types of decisions in *Overwatch*: do you lean on your mastery of one character or try something new for the good of the team? You need to make this decision every time you die, with the game giving you the freedom to switch between heroes and experiment according to the composition of your team.

Blizzard's greatest success in *Overwatch* isn't the fact that it has been able to craft so many unique and wonderful characters, but in the way that it has been able to balance

them. Every round acts as an opportunity to be taught a valuable lesson. Just as you begin to suspect that one particular hero may be overpowered in certain scenarios, you'll just as quickly realise that you were approaching it all wrong. There's a very real rush to finally figuring out a takedown strategy against a foe or particular situation.

Overwatch hides its balance underneath a sense of perceived skill. Blizzard hands you 21 characters and leaves you to it; whether you work out how to utilise each hero and counter your most deadly opponent is largely dependent on how willing you are to learn and experiment with new plays and tactics. The way the various characters can combo together adds depth and strategy to what could have been an otherwise stripped-back experience. It's easy to learn but hard to master, as the old saying goes, especially if you are running solo.

As with any online-only multiplayer game, it can sometimes be difficult to find a degree of separation between the game itself and the community that has flocked to it. As a new player to the game – or if you're on your own against a team that's clearly communicating – *Overwatch* can be frustrating. If you're paired with randoms, it can take just one or two

players who are chasing an invisible K/D ratio, rather than playing the objective, to completely derail a round. This isn't a problem in something like *Call Of Duty*, where one player can turn the tide of an entire match through impressive map management, but in *Overwatch*, team play isn't just recommended – it's necessary to succeed. Everything is better with friends, and that sentiment extends to *Overwatch*.

While the hero balance is great, some of the map design seems to be ill-conceived. Of the 12 maps available at launch, many are built around single killzones situated before an objective point. Insane strategies are already in place to keep attacking players at bay at the first hurdle; a lot of the time, you need your own team to be totally in sync to crash through a chokepoint. It's exhilarating when you manage it, but an exercise in futility when your team won't switch to snipers to combat fixed turrets, or to speedy, warping heroes to sneak behind enemy lines. Play enough of it, and *Overwatch* will alter your brain. It will let you see seemingly insurmountable scenarios and encourage you to find a way to overcome them through previous experiences – sadly, there's just nothing you can do when lumped with teammates who don't want to play ball.

If you feel the frustration growing and need a break from matchmaking, you're essentially out of luck. Considering the unique strengths of each of the heroes, you may be surprised



△OX□ Playing with random players is fine most of the time, but playing with friends is the best way to experience *Overwatch*.

“DO YOU LEAN ON YOUR MASTERY OF ONE HERO OR TRY SOMETHING NEW FOR THE GOOD OF THE TEAM?”

to learn that there's very little back-story to dig into here. Blizzard may have packed its heroes full of strong personalities and its maps with an undeniable sense of visual identity, but it's a little jarring to discover that the game's lore is expanded online in animated shorts and nowhere else. Perhaps this is the changing face of Blizzard; a studio that once revelled in its intricate 'TL;DR' plot devices stepping back from story to pull focus onto the service itself.

That does, of course, create its own set of problems. *Overwatch*'s fluid approach to design, where the balance of power can shift with a well-timed character change, ensures a strong 'just one more game' mentality is in place. Outside of that, there's very little to keep you hooked in a tangible sense. The progression system is lacking, to say the least. The game simply doesn't contain the same item escalation or sense of progression that we've come to expect from our multiplayer shooters. This is partly *Modern Warfare*'s fault – ensuring dozens of cool unlocks were tied to player skill as you levelled – though Blizzard was clearly hoping that the fact that it's fun would keep player

interest up as it gets to work on its next helping of free DLC (which it all will be, apparently).

Upon levelling up, you're given a Loot Box, which unlocks a randomised variety of cosmetic upgrades that scale in rarity. Loadouts and weapons are, of course, locked down from the outset. That's integral to the game's meticulous balance – you should always be aware of what your rival has to hand before you engage. Unfortunately, that means that many of the rewards for playing are dull accessories, such as spray paints or alternative lines of dialogue. There's no telling whether you'll get an item for a character you actually like playing, which feels like you're constantly gambling against getting an item you actually want versus one it has lumped you with. Blizzard has publicly stated its problems with getting a functioning progression system into *Overwatch* in the past, but the current infrastructure feels too needlessly bare-bones and clearly in need of refinement. Then again, if you're tired of waiting for that rare skin you want, you could always purchase a few Loot Boxes via microtransactions, or pick it up with the Gold that you (very slowly) accrue.

Truth told, 'bare-bones' is how a lot of *Overwatch* feels right now. A critical lack of game modes (what essentially amounts to four variations of King Of The Hill) just doesn't cut it and the 12 maps are already starting to become a little stale. It doesn't help that the rotation in matchmaking seems oddly weighted to the same handful of locales, and that it doesn't yet seem possible to build a persistent party to move between various games, breaking you and your friends apart as soon as a room closes or disconnects. All of this only undercuts how intoxicating the moment-to-moment action can be, though it's likely this might improve as the free content starts arriving.

But right now, *Overwatch* is merely a fantastic multiplayer shooter that will likely only hold your attention in the weeks to come if you have friends to roll with. Playing solo, you might find that the lack of progression hooks leaves you wanting more. If this is truly the new direction for Blizzard, we applaud the studio for what it has created. *Overwatch* is a design triumph – it just lacks the content to back it all up right now.

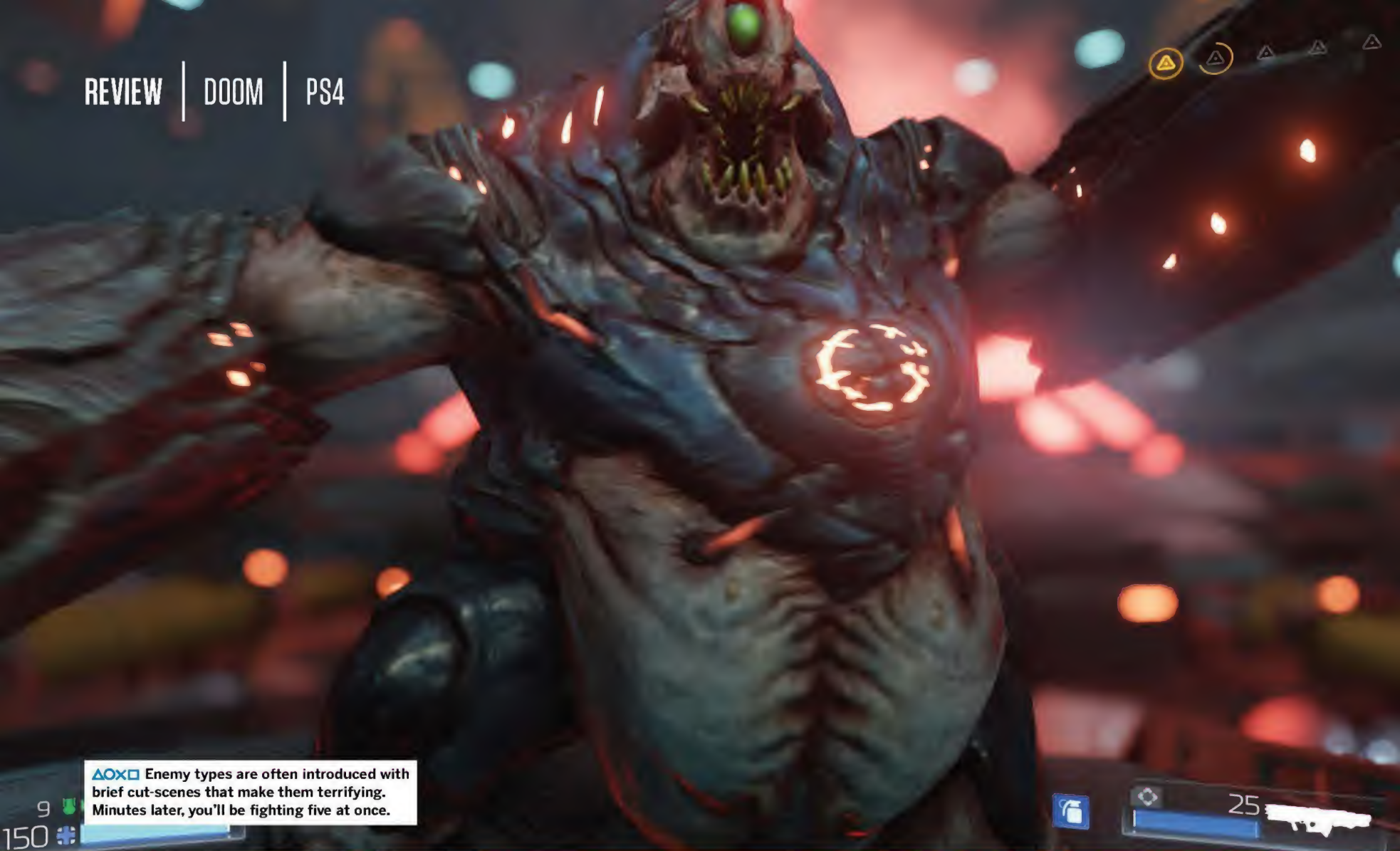
VERDICT

AN IMMEDIATE AND FINELY TUNED MULTIPLAYER SHOOTER

8

PlayMag_UK scored 8 for *Overwatch*

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**



△○×□ Enemy types are often introduced with brief cut-scenes that make them terrifying. Minutes later, you'll be fighting five at once.



"ANYONE USED TO TAKING COVER OR FINDING TIME TO RELOAD IS IN FOR A RUDE AWAKENING"





Doom

Rip and tear, until it's done

AOXO Just as you get a variety of different Glory Kill animations, enemies too have their own unique ways of finishing you off after your health hits zero.



There's a moment early on where it seems like heritage might be *Doom's* BFG, chugging guitars and grinding synths screaming their best

rendition of the classic E1M1 music as you ride a lift towards the inevitable demonic mayhem that awaits with a beaming smile.

But there's more to this reboot than pure nostalgia and those who compare it too closely to the original games are actually doing it a disservice. Sure, there are keycards and simple maps and classic enemies and weapons, but it's more than that – it's a modern take on that formula that both serves to tickle nostalgia glands and deliver something that doesn't feel dated or pandering, which is hard to do.

Environments and larger and more varied (in as much as choosing a red planet and a red purgatory actually allows) than ever, although limited freedom and prevented backtracking in places means these new levels are hardly likely to topple any of the classic *Doom* maps in most eyes. Keycards and assumed linearity are all well and good in faux-old-school design, but enemy encounters are the real deal. Showdowns seem to be a case of seeing how many enemies the game can throw around without crashing, asking players to run the gauntlet and see how much of Hell they can destroy before being pulled to pieces. 'Run' being the operative word there – anyone used to

taking cover or finding time to reload their weapons in FPS games is in for a rude awakening.

Unforgiving it may be, but unfair *Doom* is not... well, outside of a few moments, at least. When encounters typically involve tens of enemies at a time in wide-open arenas, there will naturally come a few times when their seemingly random movement and activity works against you, forcing you into corners where mobility – the only thing that can really keep you alive – is impossible. Hard counters to this exist, from the instakill Chainsaw to the room-clearing BFG, but higher difficulties place you in situations where ammo for those Win Buttons has run dry and death seems inevitable.

A bevy of suitably crazy weapon upgrades mean this isn't always the case, but to brave the higher difficulties is to accept the fact that standing still only invites death. With no regenerating health, your only option besides finding med-kits in the world is to fall back on the Glory Kill system, where weakened enemies can be finished off with contextual melee kill animations to have them drop more health than usual. In abusing this system, you almost turn the chaotic encounters into macabre puzzles – it becomes about finding the right combination of shells, cells, bullets and beams to pour into each enemies before you reach it (or it reaches you) to keep your health topped up as you chain between enemies in this way. It's immensely satisfying, fits the tone of the game well and there are enough

different takedowns per enemy type to stop them getting too old over the course of a level or even an entire playthrough.

Doom's multiplayer suite isn't quite so refined. It's fast, competent and often exciting, but it just has next to nothing to separate it from the scores of me-too online modes that have appeared in B-tier shooters over the years – the ability to briefly play as a demon is as close to innovation as it gets and frankly, it feels slightly jarring to see a progression system and gated unlocks in a *Doom* game. Some may love its simplicity and speed, though others have probably been too spoiled by classic online shooters like *Counter-Strike*, *Unreal Tournament* and *Team Fortress 2* (and now *Overwatch*).

Nailing the tone of the older games and fusing it with modern production values means that *Doom* is able to do its namesake justice, especially in its frenetic campaign. It's very gory, very metal, very stupid, very hard, very intense... it's very *Doom*, basically. And that's quite the compliment.

VERDICT

A BRUTAL AND EXHILARATING TRIBUTE TO ITS GROUNDBREAKING NAMESAKE



PlayMag_UK scored 8 for
Doom

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Bethesda

DEVELOPER
id Software

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-12

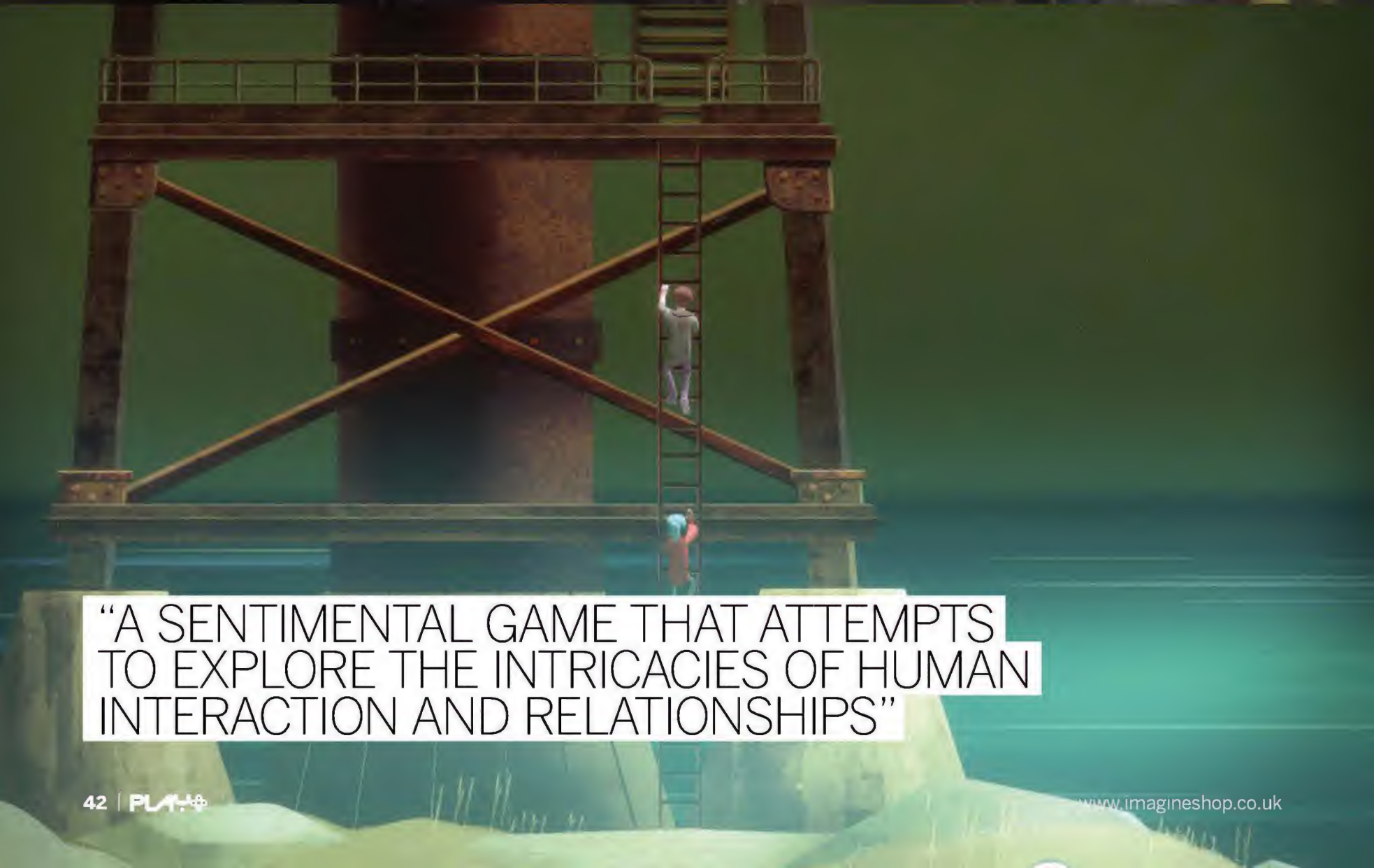
AGE RATING
18+

TWITTER
@idSoftware

AOX The art style in *Oxenfree*, the work of former Disney staff, is uniquely gorgeous. Intentionally drab in places and vibrant in others, its soft pastel tones combine with a mellow soundtrack to create an intensely atmospheric island.



JONAS: I mean, *somebody* should've locked it...?



“A SENTIMENTAL GAME THAT ATTEMPTS TO EXPLORE THE INTRICACIES OF HUMAN INTERACTION AND RELATIONSHIPS”



Oxenfree

Teen thriller with a talkative twist

AOXO Say what you like about *Oxenfree*, but there's no denying the fact that it's interesting and original, if nothing else.



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Night School Studio

DEVELOPER
In-House

PSN PRICE
£14.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
2.8GB

AGE RATING
12+

TWITTER
@nightschoolers



A group of teenagers dice with the paranormal during an island vacation gone wrong in this thriller adventure, but *Oxenfree* is

as much about relationships as it is about ghosts and ghouls. It attempts to tug at heart strings with rich characters, but despite a moody atmosphere and fantastic performances, it falls short of being truly memorable.

It sets its up like a conventional paranormal thriller: you explore the island, tracking down your friends while using a radio to tune into ghostly broadcasts, activating mysterious portals, encountering glitches in the flow of time and numerous other peculiar, mind-bending events. But *Oxenfree* is a more sentimental game that attempts to explore the intricacies of human interaction and relationships. It's a game about dialogue.

As you wander the island, Alex engages in constant conversation with whomever she's with. As these conversations unfold, you're frequently prompted to choose your responses. This is hardly a new mechanic, but these responses are remarkably organic in nature; your options are rarely clearly good or bad.

Your choices affect the cleverly interwoven conversations and nuances of the plot, which lets you explore the relationships between Alex

and her peers and pivotal events in their lives. This makes for an intriguing story that follows in the footsteps of *Heavy Rain* and the narrative-led works of Telltale Games. But *Oxenfree* ultimately fails to reach the bar set by such titles.

The script, while superbly performed, fails to realistically portray the distress we'd expect from teenagers trapped on a deserted island with a demonic force. Rather than frequent hysteria, these teens remain unnaturally calm, with over-baked witty one-liners and Nickelodeon-style wisecracks.

That along with an especially zoomed out camera, toy-like character models, and some illogical behaviour creates an unfortunate emotional disconnect, and that's a rather critical issue when you consider that the game's snail-like pacing leans heavily on its vital conversation mechanic. Regardless, *Oxenfree* is ambitious, atmospheric, and still intriguing enough that it's well worth playing if you fancy an artistic break from the typical arcade indie experience.

VERDICT

INTRIGUING, BUT THE SCRIPT LETS IT DOWN



PlayMag_UK scored 6 for
Oxenfree

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**



AOXO As you might expect, how you choose to react to each question, prompt and situation will have repercussions later.

ΔΟΧΔ If you found *Borderlands* and its sequel amusing, that's no guarantee that you're going to warm to this. Shorn of any desire to tell a story, Gearbox simply piles catchphrase upon grating catchphrase.



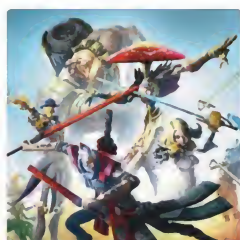
"THE COMBAT IS SO HECTIC THAT THERE'S RARELY TIME TO CONSIDER WHAT'S HAPPENING ELSEWHERE"



Battleborn

Torn to be wild

ΔOXΔ The game opens with an unskippable music video in place of an intro cutscene. It's beautifully animated, but overly long.



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
2K Games

DEVELOPER
Gearbox Software

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-10

INSTALL SIZE
15.8 GB

AGE RATING
16+

TWITTER
@Battleborn



Battleborn's campaign bucks the user-friendly status quo to deliver a shooter that isn't even slightly interested in catering to casual players.

What's more, in its own way it's as poorly conceived as *Colonial Marines* was; a situation that's exacerbated by the fact that you're supposed to grind through it an insane number of times. It may have been touted during 2K's marketing blitzkrieg as the most generous and varied FPS package this side of *Call of Duty*, but *Battleborn* struggles to even clear the first hurdle.

Structured in a vaguely similar way to *Destiny's* often breathtaking Strikes, each of the game's eight missions works as a primer for multiplayer and nothing else. You're led through a parade of massive spaces that are monotonous and empty, to do battle with either waves of enemies or an simple boss. The beautiful skyboxes do an amazing job of convincing you that you aren't just battling in a shifting library of big empty rooms, but the level of repetition on display is nauseating. Mercifully, your character's witless incidental dialogue can be switched off, but the list of in-your-face irritants is protracted and painful. Stampeding attackers persistently knock your projectiles sideways when they aren't walloping you off cliffs. Enemies can occasionally spawn beneath scenery, which means that clear-out missions are impossible to complete;

even if you're 35 minutes deep, the only option is to restart because there are no checkpoints. Health is just another collectible, so if there's a relentless trinket hoover on your team – and there almost always is – your ability to stay alive may depend on your ability to ignore combat. One enemy type is modelled on the Flood from *Halo*, the least welcome videogame comeback since *Duke Nukem*. And matchmaking in co-op restricts you from actually choosing a level, plumping instead for a voting system that could hypothetically leave your chosen missions incomplete forever. Although Gearbox is coasting off the aesthetic similarities, this most certainly isn't *Borderlands*.

But *Borderlands* wasn't a rip-roaring multiplayer shooter, and *Battleborn* flourishes pretty skilfully in that department. Although the selection of modes and maps is meagre at present – three modes, with two dedicated maps apiece – Gearbox is using the season pass for non-competitive content and giving new characters and maps away for free.

If *Battleborn* can be heartily commended for anything, it's that the characters – all 25 of them – provide genuinely contrasting ways of playing. However, the game's much-discussed utilisation of MOBA elements turns out to be something of a red herring. Incursion mode never grants you with a broad enough overview of the battle. The mini-map is mystifyingly small, and the combat is so hectic that there's rarely time to consider

what's happening elsewhere. This is a fresh and savvy online multiplayer shooter, but it's too focused on the here and now to seriously warrant a comparison with even a basic, free-to-play MOBA.

But rarely before has first-person chaos been rendered this well. The sheer visual pandemonium of what occurs when all ten players are engaged in a gigantic brawl feels like it could crash two consoles, yet there's never a hint of slowdown or any vanishing textures. *Battleborn* might never be an eSports cash cow, but you have to admire the fact that it was ready to go straight out of the gate.

It's a crushing shame that matchmaking isn't currently level-based, because it's not uncommon for a team of newcomers to get thrown up against a squad of veterans. This issue will hopefully be remedied in due course, and with plentiful free DLC due over the coming months, *Battleborn* feels like it's just getting started. Lone wolves may have their work cut out if they want to compete, but any curious parties are advised to keep an eyes trained on the game's evolution. This isn't over yet...

VERDICT

A PROMISING WORK-IN-PROGRESS



PlayMag_UK scored 6 for Battleborn

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**



A Man of Peace

Reach the medical depot

REVIEW

HOMEFRONT: THE REVOLUTION

PS4



Homefront: The Revolution

Who do you think you are kidding, North Korea?



Homefront: The Revolution suffers from severe inconsistency of tone.

Never do you feel like part of a movement, a groundswell or a resistance. You're a lone hero, capable of toppling entire platoons of enemy forces single-handed. Myriad tools are at your disposal. You have customisable weapons, sophisticated gadgets and a mobile phone that can scan enemies and gather intelligence. Conversely, the occupiers are ill-prepared and weak. Rather than the underdog, forced to use hit and run ambushes and guerrilla tactics, you feel like Captain Price, Soap and Ghost rolled into one, armed with technology that easily overpowers an inferior force. Gunfights sound great and *Homefront* manages several of the shooter basics, like decent blood effects and death physics and a simple cover system. But you may as well be playing *Far Cry* or *Just Cause*. You are the solo, unfailing saviour of the world – supporting NPCs stop just short of calling you The Chosen One.

This inconsistency is reflected in *Homefront's* level design. Philadelphia is impressively modelled and, thanks to the CryEngine's superlative lighting effects, looks wonderful at night. But it's a painfully artificial world, so filled with assignments, missions and general stuff for you to do that it can only feel like a game. Again, you never get the sense of an occupation, or a downtrodden population

fighting for freedom. For *Homefront* to work, the city needs to feel worth fighting for, as if something has been lost – or is being destroyed – due to the invaders. But this Philadelphia is essentially a playground, expressly and noticeably designed for gunfights and exploration. Its streets are littered with flashing icons and collectible junk. Its buildings are plastic, functional places, serving only as hubs for buying weapons and choosing jobs. And the people are robotic. While the recurring resistance characters recite clichéd, expository dialogue, the general population either stands idle or acts as a mere component to one of your missions. They are hostages, they are prisoners, they are a collective mind that you must arouse into rebellion by completing side-quests, but the civilians of Philly never feel like *people*. Everything in *Homefront* is designed around second-guessing what players might want. Some might call this efficient design. But when attrition, disempowerment and struggle are *Homefront's* supposed themes, the standards of open-world game-making no longer apply. On the contrary, they are jarringly out of place.

If *Homefront* is trying to be shocking (and judging by its opening cutscene, it's trying hard) then moments like these are what really make you truly feel it. At its best, it's relentlessly bleak, filled with swift, random acts of violence amongst dirty, destroyed buildings. It's only when it pushes hard that *Homefront* falls flat. It's ham-fisted and

obvious: when the resistance's doctor admonishes you over civilian casualties, it may as well prompt 'Press X to self-doubt'.

Surprisingly, *Homefront's* narrative conceits play strongest when you team up with friends. Here, you actually feel like you're fighting as part of a group. If it struggles to create a sense of community in its campaign, it's easy to imagine that you and three friends could form a working dynamic with one person handling demolitions, one doing crowd control, one sniping and one acting as healer. It's a smart move by Dambuster.

There are dozens of reasons to like *Homefront: The Revolution*. It has technical problems – slowed frame-rate, texture pop-in – but they strangely add to the game's dirty, tired aesthetic. Similarly, the abortive, messy gunfights feel appropriately amateur. Though the guns themselves are familiar, actually using them feels suitably awkward. And yet, padding and a staid narrative drag it down. It's an overburdened, graceless game struggling to tell a story that, by its nature, demands a deft approach.

VERDICT

A COMPETENT BUT INCONSISTENT SHOOTER



PlayMag_UK scored 6 for
Homefront: The Revolution

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Deep Silver

DEVELOPER
Dambuster Studios

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-4

INSTALL SIZE
34.5 GB

AGE RATING
18+

TWITTER
@HomefrontGame



"HOMEFRONT'S SUPPORTING NPCs STOP JUST SHORT OF REFERRING TO YOU AS 'THE CHOSEN ONE'"



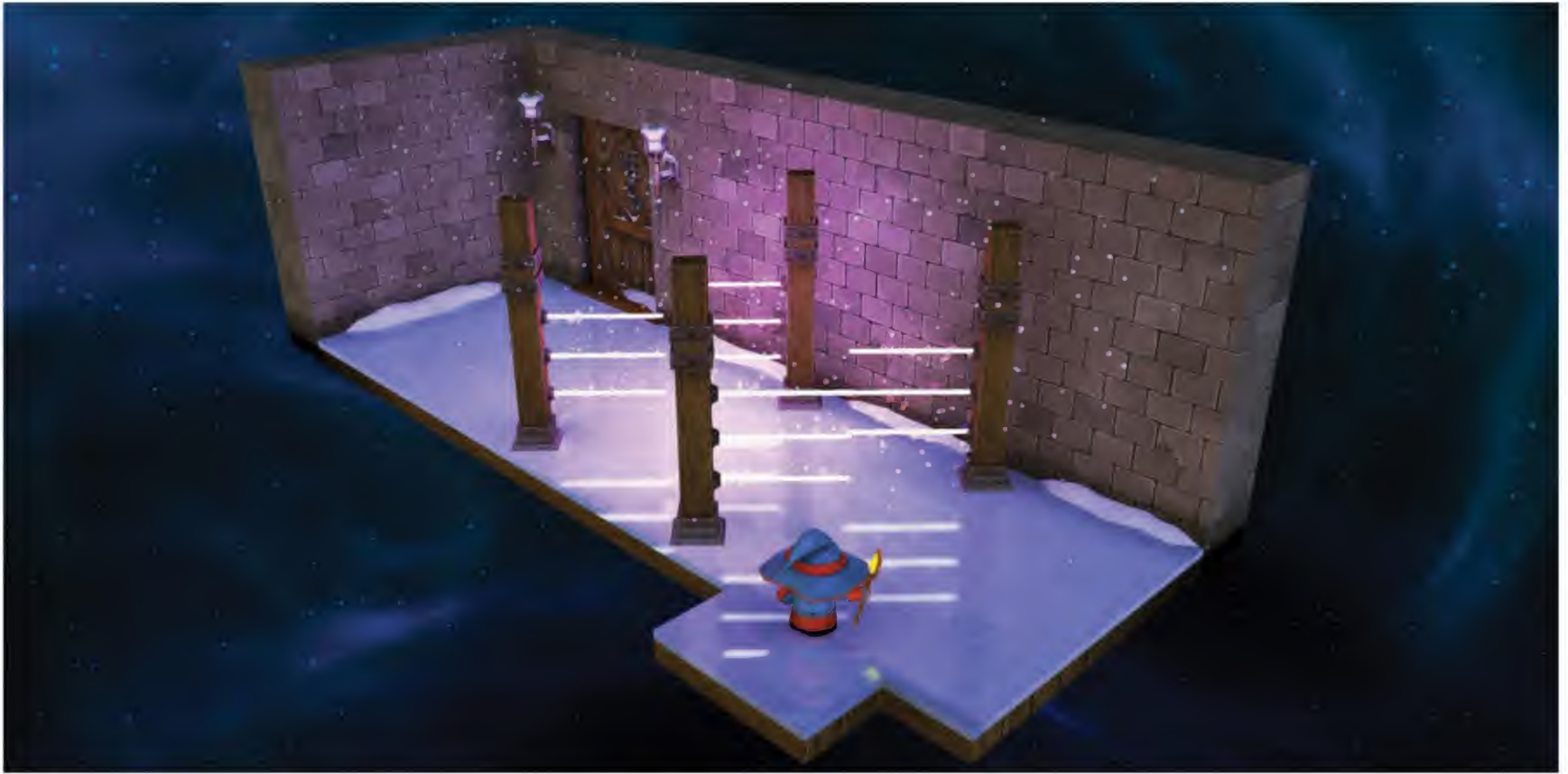
AOXO It's not like we're without a host of excellent shooters these days, leaving stuff like Homefront feeling lost on PS4.



AOXIS The game lulls you into a false sense of security with pushover challenges in the earlier rooms. But the difficulty cranks up – much death awaits.



“LUMO’S RELUCTANCE TO BETRAY THE GENRE’S FIXED VIEWPOINT IS THE SOURCE OF MUCH FRUSTRATION”



Lumo

Reviving the classic isometric adventure

ΔOX□ Older players will love how much the game evokes the feeling of retro favourites such as *Knight Lore* and *Head Over Heels*.



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Rising Star Games

DEVELOPER
Triple Eh?

PSN PRICE
£14.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
3.8GB

AGE RATING
3+

TWITTER
@RisingStarGames



Lumo is an unashamed retro throwback that brings modern flair and old-fashioned design together in a lovable package.

It's a fixed-camera isometric quest that harks back to the days of the popular early Nineties adventure genre, prodding the nostalgia glands of older gamers while serving up enough creativity to stand up in the PlayStation generation. *Lumo* places you in control of a nameless wizard charged with navigating their way through a sprawling dungeon. With relatively basic visuals and single-room puzzles and platforming, the game cleverly blends classic challenges with a fresh level of variety.

As you effortlessly speed your way through the earlier rooms, you'd be forgiven for thinking that you've seen all *Lumo* has to offer. It all feels very familiar. But it gradually serves up an array of interesting challenges and puzzles. Basic platforming gives way to water-filled rooms full of switches, conveyor belts with rolling spiked balls, icy floors with spikes and pitfalls, and poison-covered platforms that can only be survived by rolling around on a giant ball.

For as much as it enhances the classic isometric adventure with modern gameplay elements, it's also stubbornly retro in areas that will frustrate a player who doesn't appreciate the nostalgic appeal. *Lumo's* utter reluctance to betray the genre's

fixed isometric viewpoint is the source of much frustration during its more challenging platforming. Much of the difficulty in these rooms is born of your inability to accurately judge distances. Intentionally challenging players with an ineffective viewpoint is a very old-fashioned technique that's not nearly as tolerable today. But if you can push past its many stubbornly old-school traits – including its fiddly maps and frequent back-tracking – you'll be treated to a rewarding, albeit short, quest.

Adventure mode, which gives you infinite lives and checkpoints, can be finished in a sitting or two. But honouring the spirit of retro gaming, *Lumo* offers some replay value in Old School mode, which hits you with limited lives and no save feature. Die too many times and you'll find yourself thrown mercilessly back to the start of the game.

Repeated deaths in rooms that force you to retread old ground makes for windows of intense frustration. But for every maddening moment, there are numerous creative ones. And it's this variety that makes for thoroughly enjoyable adventure.

VERDICT

CHARMING, YET STUBBORNLY OLD-SCHOOL



PlayMag_UK scored 7 for Lumo

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**



ΔOX□ *Lumo* kicks off in rather clichéd dungeon corridors but as you work your way deeper into the labyrinth, you'll come across all manner of odd and elaborate rooms.

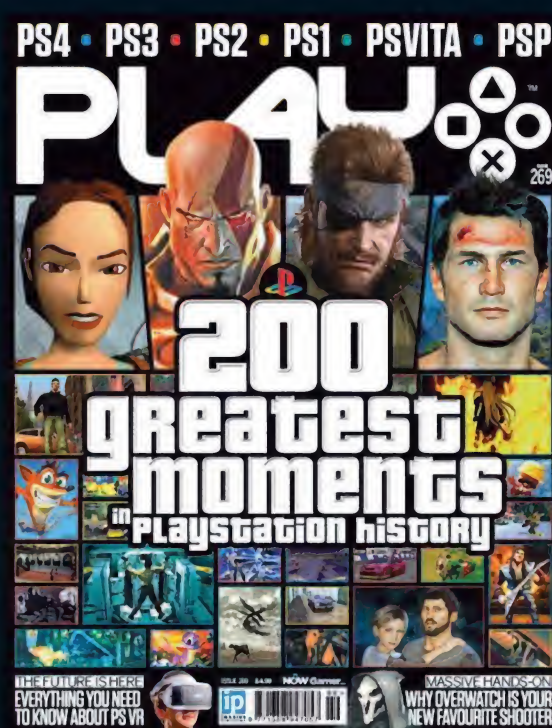
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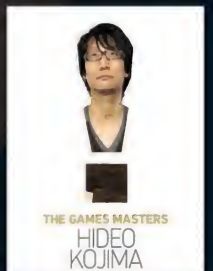
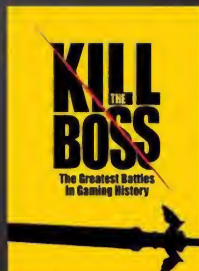
Warning: Graphic Content

EDITOR'S
PICK



PlayStation 4 Directory

Your guide to the best games available for PS4



ALL AVAILABLE TODAY ON
GREATDIGITALMAGS.COM



FORMAT PS2

RELEASE DATE 23 AUGUST 2001

PUBLISHER CAPCOM

DEVELOPER IN-HOUSE

PLAY SCORE 93%

METACRITIC SCORE N/A

DEVIL MAY CRY

A curious mix of puzzle-solving, platforming and in-depth combat, Devil May Cry changed the way action games worked forever...

We simply wouldn't have modern 3D hack-and-slash games if it weren't for *Devil May Cry*.

Hideki Kamiya might be most famous nowadays for his ridiculous antics on Twitter (well, that and a little something called *Bayonetta*), but back in 2001, his approach to game-making was the main reason for his notoriety. The game takes its cues from Capcom's older games – you can see that in the camera work, and in the intentionally *Resident Evil*-esque environments you fight through – but it only took a couple of seconds on the pad to realise that there was nothing else quite like it out there when it launched.

For a start, protagonist Dante was a breath of fresh air compared to the other sullen and moody protagonists of his time. This is likely some of Kamiya's influence coming through, to be honest – the developer is known for his rebellious attitude and tendency to say *exactly* what he's thinking. Dante mimics this, with an additional cartoon veneer: the white-haired half-demon is one of the most unapologetically mouthy characters we've seen in gaming, sometimes to the point of comedy.

Devil May Cry began its life when Shinji Mikami asked Kamiya to make a new *Resident Evil* game – something more action-orientated than previous iterations of the survival horror franchise. Working with *Resident Evil* veteran Noboru Sugimura, Kamiya pitched a game where Tony – an invincible and ridiculously smart soldier, enhanced with biotechnology – would fight an isolated zombie outbreak on an island off the coast of some European country. As the premise took shape, Kamiya concluded that Tony's coolness wouldn't come through if you could only see him from behind, and so decided to drop the pre-rendered backgrounds from the game, opting instead for a fully 3D and dynamic camera.

Mikami then weighed in, deciding this new ultra-quick and cool direction just wasn't in keeping with what *Resident Evil* was all about, and decided to scrap the idea. He convinced Kamiya, his team and Capcom to carry on the project, though, under its own title. So Kamiya renamed Tony to Dante, swapped the zombies to demons and doubled down on the combat.

THE ANATOMY OF DEVIL MAY CRY

Three core pillars that supported the inception and development of one of gaming's greatest action franchises



SPANISH ARCHITECTURE

When the team was still working on a *Resident Evil* game, they took inspiration from European architecture – most notably, Spanish. You can see this in the gothic construction of Mallet Island, and even more obviously in areas of the sequels.



ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS

It was a glitch in the original *Onimusha: Warlords* that inspired Kamiya to experiment with giving Dante the ability to juggle his enemies with his guns and aerial attacks. This led to the flashy combat that practically invented and defined its own genre.



DANTE ALIGHIERI

Surprising no-one, the lore of the entire series is inspired by the poetic works of Dante Alighieri, with the names of many of the game's characters, settings and enemies lifted directly from his work and a lot of the same thematic ground covered.

That's when *Devil May Cry's* trademark combat really began to take shape – during a test of the game, Kamiya was fascinated by how Dante could keep enemies in the air if he jumped and attacked at the right time. He decided to make this a core mechanic in the game, adding gunplay into the mix that would keep enemies in the air once launched so you could chain combos and do it in style. The depth to the systems was leaps and bounds ahead of anything like it at the time.

The whole game was wrangled to fit around Dante and his new fluid, almost balletic combat. Moves were created to allow him more mobility around the battlefield – lunges, parries, flips, area-of-effect bullet blasts; he was shaped into a finely-tuned killing machine. As a result, the game switched to a mission-based structure, with each level rewarding you for style, overall damage and speed of completion. The open-ended structure of the *Resident Evil* games was deemed unsuitable for what Kamiya wanted to achieve with *Devil May Cry* – he wanted to be a sadist, to judge the gamers that bought his game. Critics argued the game was 'too hard' on release and Kamiya basically laughed at that.

“THE WHOLE GAME WAS WRANGLLED TO FIT AROUND DANTE AND HIS NEW FLUID, ALMOST BALLETIC COMBAT ABILITIES, AND IT WORKED”

KEY FACTS

■ The PS2 version of *Devil May Cry* sold over 2.2 million copies worldwide, making it one of Capcom's best-selling new IPs of all time.

■ The series' name comes from the shop Dante runs his demon hunting business from, which was revealed to have come from Lady saying 'even a devil may cry' because of Dante's might during the ace third game.

■ Dante's personality was based on the character Cobra from a manga series with the same name

There were 3D action games before *Devil May Cry*, sure, but none of them had the focus on style and fluidity that Capcom's left-field release did. It showed what the PS2 was capable of early on in the console's life, and initiated a new trend of action gaming that relied more on skill and timing – like a rhythm-action game, almost – rather than the plodding, considered pace of other action games that had come before it.

It was also the start of the dynamic camera that would come to define a lot of the PS2's 3D output. It might have been a fairly clunky camera system, but it was slowly improved throughout the series and, if nothing else, worked as a fantastic proof of concept for a loose camera in a high-octane action game.

Without *Devil May Cry*, we wouldn't have *Bayonetta*. The *Ninja Gaiden* games wouldn't have been shaped the way they have. From Software wouldn't have made the ridiculous (but amazing) *Ninja Blade*. It's arguable that even *Demon's Souls* took inspiration from Capcom's action masterpiece to an extent, and *Resident Evil 4* certainly wouldn't be the game that it is today without the development team first cutting its teeth on *Devil May Cry* and Mallet Island.





8 MORE GAMES THAT STARTED LIFE AS SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT

Devil May Cry's journey from one type of game to something completely different is surprisingly common...



STAR FOX ADVENTURES

■ *Dinosaur Planet* was intended to be a standalone title, but as Rare was developing the title for the Nintendo 64, Miyamoto visited the studio to see progress. He noticed how similar the game was to Nintendo's own *Star Fox* series and asked the developer to alter the assets, so it eventually became *Star Fox Adventures*.



SABREMAN STAMPEDE

■ Another Rare game, another muddled development. When Rare was purchased by Microsoft, it had to rejig a lot of its projects to exorcise the Nintendo characters it was using. Inventively, the studio replaced Donkey Kong as a main character in a kart racer with its own Sabreman. The game was ultimately cancelled, though, despite Rare's efforts.



MEAN BEAN MACHINE

■ Sonic is an internationally recognised character. The *Puyo Puyo* games... well, they're not so well known. As such, Sega rebranded the game as *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine* for its release in PAL and NTSC regions. It was reskinned again for its SNES release, labelled *Kirby's Ghost Trap* in Europe and *Kirby's Avalanche* in America.



GOLDENEYE 007

■ *GoldenEye 007*'s development was a strange affair – eight of the game's ten developers had never worked on a videogame before. Initially pitched as a side-scrolling platformer, studio head Martin Hollis wanted to take a more *Virtua Cop*-style route with the game instead. Two and a half years later, the game emerged a different beast entirely.



FINAL FIGHT

■ *Street Fighter* was selling so well in the late Eighties that Capcom couldn't put related games out quickly enough. *Final Fight* was going to release with *Street Fighter* branding until pretty late in development, when feedback from fans convinced Capcom to release it with the title we know it by today.



SUPER MARIO BROS. 2

■ While the Japanese arm of the Nintendo was busy developing an original licensed platform game, America was still obsessing over Mario. For the western release, the four main characters of *Doki Doki Panic* were altered to Mario, Luigi, Toad and Peach and its title (and brand) changed. Explains why it felt so different to the rest, right?



WU-TANG: TASTE THE PAIN

■ Riffing off the increasingly popular *Mortal Kombat* games, *Thrill Kill* tried to push the violence and gory finishers a bit too far, and funding for the game was eventually pulled. Activision swooped in, resurrecting the game, but attaching – bizarrely – a Wu-Tang licence and somewhat censoring the action (it was still available if you entered a cheat code).



SLEEPING DOGS

■ Activision funded a ten-person strong studio in London to create an open world game, allowing budget to employ up to 180 staff. The game was tentatively called *Black Lotus*, but Activision wanted the *True Crime* moniker slapped on the game. Tension led to the project's cancellation – the game was all but finished, and Square picked it up.

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INTERVIEW

GAMING HEAVEN IN BULLET HELL

Dodge Roll Games' Dave Crooks on indie roguelike hit, Enter The Gungeon

Bullet hell-style gameplay is not nearly as common in western games as Japanese ones. Why do you think this is?

I suspect part of the reason is how arcade-focused the gameplay typically is – specifically, short session score attack-style gameplay. While there was something of a rebirth of the arcade in the early Nineties due to *Street Fighter II*, *Batsugun* and *DonPachi* (and games like them) didn't get nearly as wide distribution in the US. *Ikaruga* was the first true bullet hell game that many westerners played, but it wasn't released on console outside of Japan until the GameCube era... by which point arcades in the US were basically dead.

We actually came up with the name *Enter The Gungeon* before we really knew what the game was. So as we sat down to ideate on what the game was going to be, my thoughts drifted to *Ikaruga*. I loved that the polarity system gave

the player the sense of navigating impossible situations. We decided to prototype a dodge roll with i-frames (borrowing heavily from the *Souls* series) that allowed the player to pass through waves of bullets unharmed. Once we played it, we knew it was the right direction for our game.

Of all the classic shooters, which would you say are your favourites and why?

Smash TV and *Raiden II*, mostly because I spent an unhealthy amount of time and money playing them as a kid.

Were there any ways in which those games directly inspired particular elements of *Enter The Gungeon*?

From *Raiden*, we specifically implemented the 'toothpaste laser' and named it the Raiden Coil. The Space Friend passive item is also a direct reference to *Raiden*. From *Smash TV*, we had

initially planned a boss that closely resembled Mutoid Man, but unfortunately he had to be cut for time.

What was the toughest thing to implement and/or get right in the game?

Getting the controls and the aiming to feel just right was something that we agonised over quite a bit. On controller, how much aim assist should there be and how should it work? We wanted the player to generally hit what they intended to, but not feel like they were locked on. I think we succeeded, but it did take quite a bit of iteration. I will also say that drop-rates, and general scarcity were quite difficult to balance.

What kinds of items would you say are most important to a successful run?

Unsurprisingly, I think weapons and items that increase your overall DPS are a baseline for

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making a run easier. The faster you can kill something, the less time it has to be a threat to you. After that, items that increase your max health, or that offer you a period of invulnerability.

Some of the references in the weapons and items are amazing – do you have a personal favourite? Are you at liberty to reveal any that may have been cut or altered?

Thank you! One of my favourites is the Wind Up Gun, as I love *Futurama*. I think my overall favourite reference is that we called one of our achievements 'Woodsie Lord' which is a reference to the game that stole my heart.

There were a few things that needed to be changed because the reference was a little too on-the-nose. For instance, the Space Marshal originally looked eerily similar to Han Solo's DL-44. The light gun was actually called the Zapper for decent part of development.

What are the pros and cons of using procedural generation versus hand-sculpted level design?

Procedurally generated levels can add to the variety, and therefore replay value of the game. If done correctly, they can also instil a sense that 'anything can happen' in the player. The downside is that they are much harder to guarantee quality. There is the danger that procedurally generated areas can seem cookie-cutter or bland. They are also harder to troubleshoot and bug-fix, as they only exist when the game is running, and even then, they are different each time.

Hand-designed levels can give the player more specific challenges. They can provide cool set-pieces or battles that incorporate story elements. In *Gungeon*, we tried to marry both – each room's challenge is hand-designed with some small procedural variation, and the rooms are procedurally assembled into a floor.

How much work went into nailing down ETG's colourful retro-inspired aesthetic?

It actually didn't take too long, at least initially. Our artist (Joe Harty) began working on what the game was going to look like as soon as we knew we wanted to make a dungeon crawler. A few weeks in, Joe showed us his design for the Bullet Kin character. The moment the team saw the Bullet Kin, we knew it had to be the foundation for the rest of the art direction. Almost every piece of art in the game is on version two, if not three or four – while we quickly found the aesthetic, we refined it over the course of development.

Are there any secrets or Easter eggs in the game that nobody has found yet?

I wish! But gamers armed with the power of the internet can decipher anything. They even found some stuff in the files that we didn't want to show yet!

EXTENDED PLAY

RESIDENT EVIL

Want something to keep you busy until you can return to the world of survival horror? You have plenty of great options (and some not-so-great ones) at your fingertips...



REMASTERS

■ **EVERY DEVELOPER AND** their dogs seem to be hopping on the Remaster Express (we didn't know they allowed pets) and while some of the *Resi* remasters might not be up to the standards of their peers, convenience counts for a lot – without going to the hassle of setting up an older console, for instance, there's no other way to play the likes of *Resident Evil 4* or *Code Veronica*. We'd probably lump the GameCube remake of the original in with these (it got a PS4 re-release last year) as well, and it's arguably the best of the bunch if it's a classic horror fix you're after, rather than a slice of the series' new-fangled action approach.



PLAYSTATION CLASSICS

■ **ALL THREE OF** the PlayStation games later got released on PSN, meaning you can play the original games on PS3 or Vita, or even PSP if you want. Anyone who tells you the controls are awful by today's standards is sadly correct, although that's still sort of the point – struggling with the awkward controls while something horrid shambles towards you was always a key way the early games were able to build tension. Get over the tank controls, though, and you'll find that the original is still comedy gold, *Resi 2* is still a masterpiece of design and *Nemesis* is still not as good as everyone said it was.



DEAD SPACE

■ **IF, LIKE MANY,** you list *Resi 4* as your favourite in the series, you owe it to yourself to give Visceral's incredible action-horror games a look. The original, while similar in handling to *RE4*, relies more on scares and tension like earlier *Resi* games. *Dead Space 2*, meanwhile, cranks up the action just like *Resi 4* did and while some felt it lost something in the process, others will swear blind that it's the best of the lot. Last and unfortunately least, *Dead Space 3* sort of lost the plot, but if you enjoyed the co-op modes in recent *Resi* games, it's still absolutely worth playing.



DECK BUILDING GAME

■ **YOU MIGHT HAVE** noticed that we like to bring attention to game-related board games in the pages of *Play* – we're huge fans of putting down the controller and gathering round a table for some physical gaming fun from time to time, and we simply want to help spread this love. While this might not be the best card game on the market, fans will love how well themed up it all is, and it might make

a decent entry point to the whole deck building scene for those who love *Resi* but know little about card games. Basically, you need to be finding ways to fill your deck with great cards while flushing out the bad stuff so that you get better draws each round, in turn letting you make even bigger plays. The rules are a little daunting at first, but practically anyone can pick it up after a game or two.



RESIDENT EVIL 5/6 (THEY'RE ACTUALLY OKAY, WE PROMISE)

■ **THE AMOUNT OF** hate that the last two *Resident Evil* games got is frankly unfair, yet it mostly stems from two truths – that it wasn't like the original horror games and that they were as good as *Resi 4*. Double truth accepted, but that doesn't mean these shunned siblings of the family can't be enjoyed on their own

merits. *RE5* was criticised for its poor ally AI but play with a friend and this is moot – co-op is the best way to enjoy both this and *RE6*, actually. The main issue with the more recent game is that there is a lot of filler content... well, that and the fact that Jake's sections felt really awkward. Leon's stuff is really cool, though.

TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE



NBA 2K16

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 5/5

TROPHIES: 51 🏆 1 🏆 3 🏆 5 🏆 42

■ **THE FACT THAT** only a ridiculous 0.1 per cent of players have the Platinum almost a year after launch should tell you everything you need to know. The Trophy list is a brutal mix of grind-heavy rewards and pot luck, with a bunch of them tied to MyTeam. Assuming you don't fancy dropping real cash on in-game currency, you'll need to get lucky with what you pull from packs and put a lot of time into getting more. That's just one mode, too – pretty much all of the others have Trophies tied to them which will take just as long. Estimates suggest a total time of around 500 hours. Yikes...



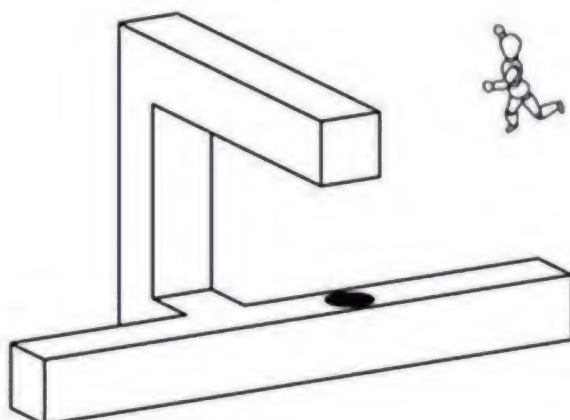
LITTLE DEVIANTS

PLATFORM: VITA DIFFICULTY: 4/5

TROPHIES: 53 🏆 1 🏆 1 🏆 8 🏆 43

■ **EVEN THOUGH IT** looks very much like the kind of game that should cough up a Platinum in a couple of hours, *Little Deviants* is actually surprisingly tough. The main difficulty comes in trying to earn gold on every level, as some of these require effectively perfect runs and mastering stages to that degree will naturally take a fair bit of time, especially when the variety of gameplay styles means you don't really carry a lot of general skills from one level to the next. Do yourself a favour and get the online Trophies out of the way while it's on Plus and people are still grabbing/playing it – you can always boost for them later if you don't, mind. Almost all of the others will pop on your way to 'Devilish Deviant'... assuming your attention span holds out.





ECHOCHROME

PLATFORM: PS3 DIFFICULTY: 3/5

TROPHIES: 10 🏆 0 🏆 2 🏆 1 🏆 7

■ **EVEN THOUGH IT** doesn't have a Platinum, this interesting puzzle game is a little cheeky in having a Gold that works like one – 'echochrome master' won't pop until you get the other nine. That's going to involve playing through the entire game at least twice, once running all of the individual stages on their own and a second time running through each entire area as a single course.

“EVEN THOUGH IT DOESN'T HAVE A PLATINUM, IT STILL HAS A GOLD THAT WORKS LIKE ONE”

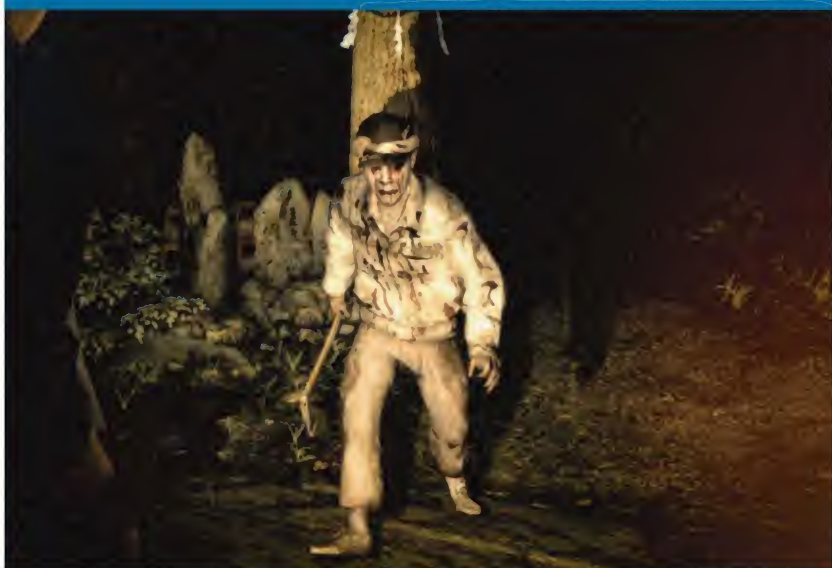
It makes sense to do the stages individually first to get the hang of them, then run the course after while they're still fresh in your mind. Do the lot like this and there are three Trophies up for grabs, with the rest simply awarded for milestones in falls, echoes, leaps and steps, all of which should just unlock naturally as you progress.

SIREN: BLOOD CURSE & GOD OF WAR: CHAINS OF OLYMPUS

PLATFORM: PS3/VITA DIFFICULTY: 0/5

TROPHIES: 0 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 0

■ **IN A RETREAD** of last month's poor show, Sony once again decides that Vita and PS3 owners don't deserve new Trophies – this duo comes from a time before Trophies were even a thing. Both games are really quite good, don't get us wrong, and those who haven't played them before certainly shouldn't let the lack of Trophies put them off doing so. But next month, could we get some easy Platins to make up for this two-month drought, Sony? Or just some games with Trophies, like, *at all*? That'd be really nice.



GONE HOME

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 1/5

TROPHIES: 10 🏆 0 🏆 1 🏆 6 🏆 3

■ **IT WASN'T LOOKING** too good for aspiring Trophy hunters this month with only two tough Plats up for grabs, but at least *Gone Home* offers a nice gentle comedown and a modest spread of Trophies that can be racked up in a matter of minutes. It's super-short so once your first run is done, dive back in and go for the speedrun Trophies first, then the hidden ones – take the purple ball from the garage to Sam's room; put the duck in the nest in the attic; turn on all eight taps in the house at once; open the safe before finding the code (it's 1963); hit the button in the cupboard in the guest room. That's those sorted... just collectibles left!

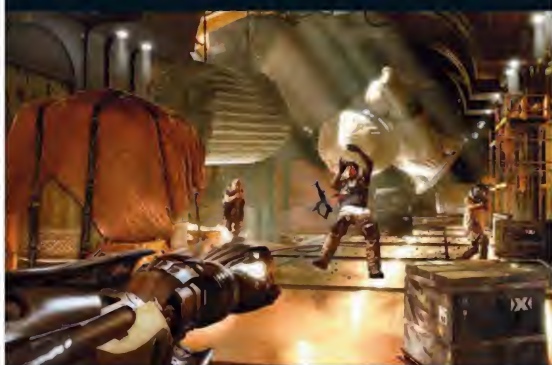
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DEUSEX: MANKIND DIVIDED



JENSEN'S BACK, AND he's got a whole bunch of new toys. Check them out – as well as the new Breach mode – and embrace the future.

WATCH DOGS 2



THE ORIGINAL HAD loads of great elements and ideas but was let down by its 'iconic' hero. Take a look at how Ubisoft is addressing this...

DESTINY: RISE OF IRON



THE NEXT CHAPTER in the *Destiny* saga is upon us, so let's discuss what lies in store for Year Three. Oh yeah, Gjallarhorn is back. Gulp.

SHARING



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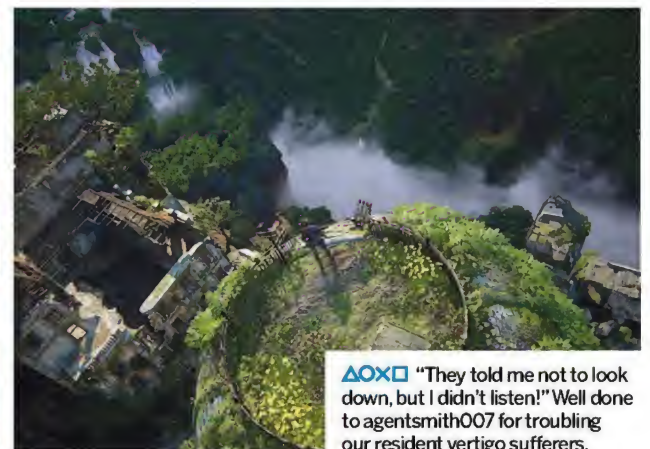
YOUR BEST SCREENS



ΔOXΔ The call went out for *Uncharted* shots, and you lot delivered! This one is ace – Hybr1dH3r0 really managed to capture a sense of scale, wonder and adventure.



ΔOXΔ Is it just us, or would dazman2010's effort not look out of place in a travel brochure? It's such a beautiful game...



ΔOXΔ "They told me not to look down, but I didn't listen!" Well done to agentsmith007 for troubling our resident vertigo sufferers.

YOU HAVEN'T
PLAYED...?

SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED

Combining the horror experience of *Resi* veteran Shinji Mikami with the punk rock game design of Goichi Suda made for one of the strangest games EA has ever put its name to...



■ **GIVEN THAT ONE** of the key creatives behind the game was also responsible for the mighty *Resident Evil 4*, it's safe to say that there was something of a buzz around this horror-tinged shooter when it was still in development. It's one of the strangest partnerships in gaming history, actually – a collaboration between a writer who never plays by the book in Grasshopper's Goichi Suda (*No More Heroes*, *Lollipop Chainsaw*), a designer who wrote the book on action games in *Resi 4* director Shinji Mikami and EA, a publisher known to often follow the book to the letter with its predictable sequels. We've no idea how such a thing ever even got off the ground but we're glad it did – there's nothing else out there quite like it.

Hero Garcia Hotspur's quest to save his girlfriend from a demon lord plays out a lot like a typical tight third-person shooter, but its design makes it anything but. It somehow manages to blend horror, comedy and the occult into something completely original, never really pushing any aspect to the extreme but with the naturally uncertainty of this genre-defying shapeshifter a perfect fit for its setting. *Silent Hill* composer Akira Yamaoka's typically unsettling soundtrack only adds to this unique ebb and flow of tonal shifts and while some never got on with how erratically it can seem to change things up, others (including us) absolutely love it. How do you find out which camp you fall into? Why, that's easy – we'll see you in Hell.

FROM HELL

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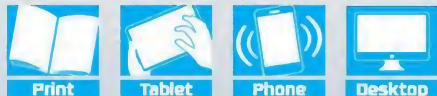


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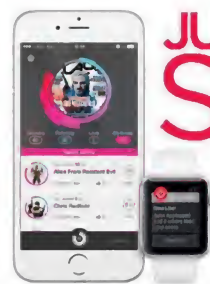


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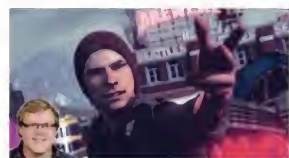
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LET'S PLAY... PS4 EXCLUSIVES



LUKE ALBIGÉS THE ORDER: 1886

8 Not every game needs to be a 50-hour epic with a crappy multiplayer mode tacked on. For what it is (and what it was designed to be), Ready At Dawn's steampunk shooter is stunning and great fun.



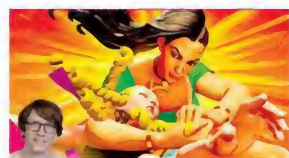
LIAM WARR INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

7 The powers are cool and it's all very pretty, but it just feels like it's going through the motions. Still, I got an easy Platinum and didn't hate Delsin as much as I expected to, so that's something, I suppose.



REBECCA RICHARDS LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

8 It had more than its fair share of issues at launch, but the worst of that is sorted. Now, I get to throw Swoop, Toggle and Oddsock around tons of levels without having to worry about breaking the game. Hurrah!



PAUL WALKER-EMIG STREET FIGHTER V

9 While I'm still hoping to see Hairy Kano (read: Blanka) join the roster at some point, there's a decent mix of fighters already, even if Capcom's long-term vision for the game didn't do it any favours around launch.

PS4



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Alekhine's Gun	270	3
Alien: Isolation	249	9
Alienation	270	8
Amplitude	266	8
Arslan: The Warriors Of Legend	268	5
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China	257	7
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: India	266	7
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	8
Assassin's Creed Syndicate	264	4
Assassin's Creed: Unity	251	6
Axiom Verge	256	9
Batman: Arkham Knight	258	9
Battlefield 4	238	8
Battlefield Hardline	256	7
Blazblue Chronophantasma Extend	264	9
Bloodborne	256	9
Bloodborne: The Old Hunters	265	9
Bound By Flame	245	6
Broforce	268	6
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops III	264	8
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	7
Child Of Light	244	7
CounterSpy	248	5
DariusBurst: Chronicle Saviours	266	8
Dark Souls III	269	9
Day Of The Tentacle Remastered	269	8
Daylight	245	2
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	7
Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round	254	7
Destiny	249	9
Destiny: House Of Wolves	258	8
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	7
Destiny: The Taken King	262	9
Devil May Cry 4: Special Edition	258	8
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	248	9
Dirt Rally	269	9
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	8
Divinity: Original Sin Enhanced Edition	264	8
Don't Starve	240	8
Dragon Age: Inquisition	251	8
Dragon Ball Xenoverse	255	5
Dragon Quest Heroes	263	8
Driveclub	250	8
Dying Light	254	9
Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	8
EA Sports UFC	246	7
EA Sports UFC 2	269	8
Enter The Gungeon	269	8
Ether One	258	8
Everybody's Gone To The Rapture	261	8
Evolve	254	6
F1 2015	260	8
Fallout 4	264	9
Far Cry 4	251	8
Far Cry Primal	268	8
Fez	243	10
FIFA 15	249	8
FIFA 16	262	9
Final Fantasy Type-0	255	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	243	9
Firewatch	267	6
Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice	253	8
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	252	9
God Of War III Remastered	260	8
Grand Theft Auto V	251	10
Grim Fandango Remastered	254	8
Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*	253	9
Guitar Hero Live	264	8
Hardware: Rivals	266	5
Hitman	268	9
Hohokum	248	8
Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number	255	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
inFamous: First Light	249	5
inFamous: Second Son	242	8
Invisible, Inc.	270	9
Just Cause 3	265	7
JStars Victory VS+	260	6
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	8
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	246	8
King's Quest: A Knight To Remember	261	8
Knack	238	6
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	252	5
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	252	6
Lego Dimensions	263	7
Lego Marvel's Avengers	267	6
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	8
Lego Jurassic World	258	7
Lego The Hobbit	244	6
LittleBigPlanet 3	251	9
Lords Of The Fallen	251	7
Madden 16	262	8
Mad Max	262	4
Mercenary Kings	244	8
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	8
Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain	261	9
Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor	250	8
Mortal Kombat X	257	9
Murdered: Soul Suspect	246	4
N++	261	8
Naruto Shippuden Ultimate Ninja Storm 4	267	8
NBA 2K15	250	8
Need For Speed	264	5
Need For Speed Rivals	238	8
NHL 15	249	6
Not A Hero	267	6
Nuclear Throne	266	8
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	244	6
Outlast	241	7
PES 2015	250	9
PES 2016	262	9
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare	248	7
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare 2	268	8
Project Cars	258	6
Rainbow Six Siege	265	8
Ratchet & Clank	269	8
République	268	7
Resident Evil HD	253	8
Resident Evil Revelations 2	256	7
Resogun	238	9
Resogun Heroes	247	9
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Rocket League	260	8
Rogue Legacy	248	9
Rory Mollroy PGA Tour	260	5
Salt And Sanctuary	269	8
Sébastien Loeb Rally Evo	267	5
Severed	270	8
Sheltered	270	9
Shovel Knight	258	9
Skylanders Superchargers	263	7
Skylanders Swap Force	238	7
Skylanders Trap Team	250	7
SOMA	262	8
Star Wars Battlefront	265	6
Street Fighter V	267	9
Strider	242	6
Super Time Force Ultra	262	9
Switch Galaxy Ultra	253	8
Tales From The Borderlands: Zero Sum	252	7
Tearaway Unfolded	262	7
Teslagrad	253	7
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	245	2
The Binding Of Isaac: Rebirth	251	9
The Crew	252	5
The Evil Within	250	8
The Last Of Us Remastered	247	10
The Order: 1886	254	8
The Vanishing Of Ethan Carter	260	8
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt	257	10
The Witness	267	10

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Thief	241	7
This War Of Mine: The Little Ones	267	7
Tiny Brains	240	6
Titan Souls	257	7
Tom Clancy's The Division	268	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 5	263	3
TrackMania Turbo	269	8
Transistor	245	9
Transformers: Devastation	263	8
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	3
Trials Fusion	244	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	258	8
Uncharted 4: A Thief's End	270	10
Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection	263	8
Unravel	267	7
Until Dawn	261	8
Valiant Hearts	247	6
War Thunder	239	8
Wasteland 2: Director's Cut	264	8
Watch Dogs	245	8
Warriors Orochi 3 Ultimate	249	6
Wolfenstein: The New Order	245	8
Wolfenstein: The Old Blood	258	8
WWE 2K15	252	4
WWE 2K16	264	5

PS3



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
007 Legends	225	4
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	6
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	8
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	7
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	7
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	5
Afro Samurai	177	6
After Burner Climax	193	9
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	7
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	4
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	5
Age Of Booty	172	8
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	5
Alice: Madness Returns	207	6
Alien Breed: Impact	196	8
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	8
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	6
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	4
Aliens Vs Predator	189	7
All Zombies Must Die!	214	6
Alone In The Dark	173	7
Alpha Protocol	193	8
Amy	215	1
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	7
Ape Escape	208	5
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	239	7
Aqua Panic	193	6
Arcana Heart 3	207	7
Armageddon Riders	207	6
Armored Core: For Answer	173	6
Armored Core 4	153	6
Armored Core V	217	6
Army Of Two	164	8
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	6
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	4
Assassin's Creed	161	5
Assassin's Creed II	186	9
Assassin's Creed III	225	7
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	9
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	7
Assassin's Creed: Rogue	251	7
Asura's Wrath	216	7
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	6
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	7
The Baoning	210	7
Band Hero	187	6
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	8
Batman: Arkham City	211	9

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly
squeezed among all your
old favourites

Uncharted 4: A Thief's End	10
Invisible, Inc.	9
Sheltered	9
Alienation	8
Severed	8
Alekhine's Gun	3

JUST A SCORE

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- Score anything in the world
- Get involved with the team
- Follow a range of scorers for your favourite topics
- Give your opinion instantly

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	8
Battle Fantasia	176	7
Battlefield 1943	182	9
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	8
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	9
Battlefield 3	212	8
Battleship	219	4
Bayonetta*	187	9
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	9
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	7
Beat Sketcher	201	8
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	8
Beyond: Two Souls	236	7
Binary Domain	216	7
Bionic Commando	179	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	6
BioShock	172	9
BioShock 2	189	8
BioShock Infinite	230	9
BlackSite	163	4
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	5
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	9
Blazing Angels	151	5
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	6
Blitz: The League II	172	6
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	6
Blur	193	8
Bodycount	210	5
Bomberman Ultra	185	8
Borderlands	185	8
Borderlands 2	223	9
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	250	6
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	7
Braid	188	9
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	8
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	7
Brütal Legend	185	7
Bulletstorm	203	8
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	5
Burnout Crash	211	7
Burnout Paradise	162	8
Burn Zombie Burn	178	8
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	8
Buzz! Quiz World	185	7
Calling All Cars	155	8
Call Of Duty 3	151	5
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	6
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	9
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	8
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	8
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	8
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	3
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	7
Castle Crashers	200	9
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	7
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	9
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	8
Carnival Island	213	5
Catan	195	8
Cars 2	208	6
The Cave	230	7
Catherine	215	6
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	8
Child Of Eden	211	8
Chime Super Deluxe	203	8
Civilization Revolution	168	9
Clash Of The Titans	193	6
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	6
The Club	163	8
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	9
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	8
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	6
Commander's Challenge	185	6

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Command & Conquer	175	4
Conan	160	7
Condemned 2	165	7
Costume Quest	199	7
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	9
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	3
Create	199	7
Critter Crunch	188	9
Cross Edge	182	5
Crystal Defenders	184	4
Crysis 2	204	7
Crysis 3	230	6
Cubix HD	207	7
The Cursed Crusade	211	4
Damnation	181	3
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	3
Dante's Inferno	189	8
The Darkness	154	9
The Darkness II	215	7
Dark Sector	165	6
Dark Souls	211	9
Dark Souls II	242	9
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	8
Dark Void	188	8
Darksiders	188	8
Darksiders II	221	8
DC Universe Online	202	8
de Blob 2	203	6
Dead Or Alive 5	223	7
Dead Island	210	7
Dead Island: Riptide	231	6
Dead Rising 2	197	8
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	6
Dead Space	172	9
Dead Space 2	201	9
Dead Space 3	228	7
Dead Space: Extraction	203	8
Dead Space: Ignition	199	4
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	6
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	8
Deadpool	233	6
DeathSpank	195	8
Def Jam: Icon	151	6
Def Jam Rapstar	199	7
Defiance	231	5
Demon's Souls	193	9
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	2
Derrick The Deathfin	227	7
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	9
Devil May Cry 4	163	9
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	8
Diablo III	235	9
DiRT 3	206	8
DiRT Showdown	219	7
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	8
Dishonored	224	9
Disney Infinity	235	8
DJ Hero	186	9
DJ Hero 2	198	8
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	3
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	6
Double Dragon Neon	224	4
DmC Devil May Cry	227	9
Dragon Age: Origins	186	8
Dragon Age II	203	6
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	4
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	6
Dragon's Crown	235	8
Dragon's Dogma	218	8
Driver: San Francisco	209	7
Duke Nukem Forever	207	3
D&D: Chronicles Of Mystara	233	8
Dungeon Siege III	206	8
Dust 514	233	5
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	5
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	4
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	4
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	7

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
EA Sports Active 2	200	8
EA Sports MMA	198	8
Eat Lead	178	3
echochrome	169	8
echochrome II	202	8
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	6
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	9
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	9
Elefunk	170	4
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	7
Enchanted Arms	152	6
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	8
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	5
Eternal Sonata	176	8
Euforia	212	8
Everybody's Golf 5	158	8
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	9
Explodemon	203	7
Eye Of Judgment	159	6
EyePet	185	8
F1 2012	223	7
F1 Race Stars	226	6
FaceBreaker	170	5
Fairy Fencer F	250	4
Fallout 3	173	10
Fallout: New Vegas	198	8
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	3
Far Cry 2	172	7
Far Cry 3	226	8
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	8
Fat Princess	183	6
FEAR	151	8
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	8
FEAR 3	208	6
FIFA 13	223	8
FIFA 14	236	9
FIFA Street (2012)	217	7
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	9
The Fight	199	4
Fight Night Champion	203	8
Fight Night Round 3	151	8
Fight Night Round 4	181	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	8
Final Fantasy XIII	190	8
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	8
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	8
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	5
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	5
Flight Control HD	198	8
Flock!	179	7
Folklore	158	6
Front Mission Evolved	198	5
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	5
From Dust	211	8
Fuel	180	4
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	6
Fuse	232	7
Game Of Thrones	220	3
Gatling Gears	207	6
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	3
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	8
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	6
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	8
GI Joe	183	2
The Godfather	151	3
The Godfather II	178	4
God Of War III	190	9
God Of War: Ascension	230	9
God Of War Collection*	188	9
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	7
The Golden Compass	162	3
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	6
Gotham City Imposters	216	7
Gran Turismo 6	200	8
Gran Turismo 6	239	8
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	9
Grand Theft Auto V	236	10

*denotes import review

TEN YEARS AGO TOP REVIEWS



1
LocoRoco (94%)



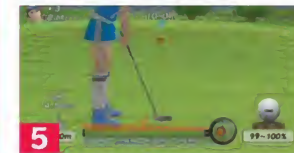
2
GTA: Liberty City Stories (90%)



3
Micro Machines V4 (80%)



4
Formula One '06 (73%)



5
Eagle Eye Golf (73%)



6
Popolocrois (71%)



7
Forbidden Siren 2 (70%)



8
FlatOut 2 (69%)



9
Astonishia Story (68%)



10
Shinobido (63%)

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



FIGHTING ON STREETS

PLAY: MORTAL KOMBAT

By our estimation, *Street Fighter*'s gory competitor actually has more stages based on streets (rather than airfields, plazas, labs and whatnot) than Capcom's fighter. Which is a bit weird.



BEATING UP MORTALS

PLAY: STREET FIGHTER

Conversely, however, a good chunk of the *MK* cast is actually *immortal*, or some nonsensical equivalent. With the possible exception of Akuma, the entire *SF* roster is made up of regular (albeit well strong) people. Huh.



BAD CONTROLS

PLAY: OCTODAD

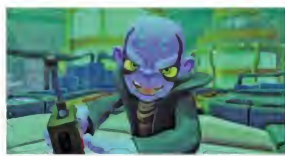
It might be a pain to get the brilliantly disguised cephalopod to do what you want, but that's the point – wandering around on land in a sharp suit doesn't come naturally to an octopus.



SOILING YOURSELF

PLAY: DEAD SPACE

The ill-fated third chapter might have dashed our hopes for a new game, but the original still holds up pretty damn well. It's the most terrifying of the three as well, particularly with a proper good audio setup.



INVADER ZIM

PLAY: SKYLANDERS

Nothing says *Zim* quite like the piercing, doom-related screechings of Richard Horvitz. Who, as it happens, also voices returning villain Kaos in just about every *Skylanders* game. Embrace your moosey fate...

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Greed Corp	191	7
Grid 2	232	7
Grid Autosport	246	6
GTI Club+	174	7
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	9
Guardians Of Middle-earth	227	7
Guitar Hero III	160	9
Guitar Hero 5	184	8
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	7
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	8
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	6
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	7
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	9
Gundemonium Collection	197	8
Gunstar Heroes	181	8
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	6
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	3
Haze	167	6
Heavenly Sword	157	7
Heavy Rain	189	9
Heavy Weapon	187	7
Heroes Over Europe	184	4
Hitman: Absolution	225	9
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	7
Homefront	203	6
The House Of The Dead 4	218	8
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	7
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	5
Hustle Kings	190	8
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	2
I Am Alive	217	6
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	210	9
The Incredible Hulk	168	5
inFamous	180	8
inFamous 2	207	8
Inferno Pool	181	8
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	8
Inversion	220	4
Iron Man	166	5
Iron Man 2	193	5
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	8
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	5
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	6
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	6
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	8
Journey	216	9
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	7
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	6
Just Cause 2	190	8
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	7
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	7
Katamari Forever	184	8
Kick-Ass The Game	194	6
Killer Is Dead	235	7
Killzone 2	176	9
Killzone 3	202	8
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	8
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	9
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	7
The King Of Fighters XII	182	7
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	8
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	2
Kung Fu Rider	196	6
Lair	158	5
LA Noire	206	9
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	9
The Last Guy	171	9
Last Rebellion	191	4
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	5
Legendary	173	6
Lego Batman	173	6
Lego Batman 2	221	8
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	7
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	6
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	7
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	7
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	7
Lego Rock Band	187	8
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	7
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	8
Lego The Lord Of The Rings	227	7
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	2
Limbo	209	9
LittleBigPlanet	172	9
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	10
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	8
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	7

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
London 2012	221	4
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	6
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	5
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	4
Lost Planet 2	192	8
Lost Planet 3	236	5
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	6
Madagascar 3	224	3
Madden NFL 12	209	8
Madden NFL 13	223	8
Madden NFL Arcade	188	5
Mafia II	196	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	7
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	7
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	9
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	8
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	6
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	6
Max Payne 3	219	7
Mass Effect 2	201	10
Mass Effect 3	216	9
Medal Of Honor	198	8
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	8
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	7
Mega Man 9	172	7
Mega Man 10	192	8
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	7
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	9
		<p><i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.</p>
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	9
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	9
Metro: Last Light	231	6
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	5
Microbot	202	5
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	8
Mindjack	202	3
Minecraft	240	9
Mini Ninjas	184	8
Mirror's Edge	173	7
MLB: The Show 14	245	9
ModNation Racers	192	8
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	9
Mortal Kombat	205	8
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	6
MotoGP 13	233	7
Motorhead	173	6
MotorStorm	151	9
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	7
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	9
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	5
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	4
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	6
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	6
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	5
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	8
Naughty Bear	195	6
NBA 2K12	211	8
NBA 2K13	224	8
NBA Jam	200	6
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	6
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	9
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	9
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	8
Need For Speed Shift	184	8
Need For Speed: The Run	213	6
Need For Speed Undercover	173	7
NeverDead	215	3
Nier	192	6
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	8
NHL 12	210	7
NHL 13	223	7
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	8
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	8
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	6
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	8
Noby Noby Boy	177	8
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	8
Nucleus	155	8
Okami HD	225	9
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	6
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	7
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	7
The Orange Box	161	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Outland	207	7
OutRun Online Arcade	180	8
Overlord II	181	6
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	9
Pain	183	6
Payday: The Heist	213	8
Payday 2	235	8
Peggle	189	9
Persona 4 Arena Ultimax	250	9
PES 2012	210	7
PixelJunk 4am	220	4
PixelJunk Eden	169	6
PixelJunk Shooter	187	9
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	9
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	7
PixelJunk Racers	160	7
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	5
Poker Night 2	232	5
Portal 2	205	10
Prince Of Persia	174	8
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	6
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	6
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	8
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	4
Prototype	181	7
Prototype 2	219	7
Puddle	216	7
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	4
Puppeteer	236	7
Pure	171	8
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	6
Quantum Of Solace	175	5
Quantum Theory	197	2
Race Driver: GRID	167	8
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	8
Rage	211	6
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	9
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	8
Rango	203	5
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	8
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	6
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	5
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	7
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	9
Rayman Legends	235	8
Rayman Origins	212	8
Red Dead Redemption	193	9
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	6
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	8
Remember Me	232	6
Renegade Ops	211	7
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	8
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	7
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	3
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	7
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	9
Resident Evil 5	177	8
Resident Evil 6	223	8
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	8
Resistance 2	173	9
Resistance 3	210	9
Resonance Of Fate	191	8
Retro City Rampage	228	7
Ridge Racer 7	151	7
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	6
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	8
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	5
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	5
Risen 3: Titan Lords	248	2
Risk: Factions	202	8
Rock Band Blitz	223	8
Rock Band	169	9
Rock Band 2	179	9
Rock Band 3	199	9
Rocksmith	223	7
Rogue Warrior	188	1
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	4
Rune Factory Oceans	220	5
RUSE	197	8
The Saboteur	187	6
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	7
Sacred 3	247	6
Saints Row 2	172	7
Saints Row: The Third	211	8
Saints Row IV: Gat Out Of Hell	253	6
SBK Generations	220	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse	194	9
Savage Moon	175	8
Saw	186	5
SBK Generations	220	5
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	9
Section 8: Prejudice	209	8
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	8
Sega Rally	158	9
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	7
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	7
Shadows Of The Damned	207	8
Shank	197	8
Shatter	183	9
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	7
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	7
ShellShock 2: Blood Trails	177	3
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	6
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	8
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	7
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	6
The Simpsons Game	160	8
The Sims 3	199	8
The Sims 3: Pets	212	7
SingStar	159	8
Singularity	195	8
Siren Blood Curse	170	6
Skate	159	8
Skate 2	175	8
Skate 3	192	8
Skullgirls	218	8
Sleeping Dogs	222	8
The Sly Collection	200	8
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	6
Sniper Elite V2	218	5
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	4
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	5
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	6
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	8
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	4
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	7
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	9
Sonic Generations	212	7
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	5
Sonic Unleashed	175	4
Sorcery	219	7
SoulCalibur IV	169	9
SoulCalibur V	214	8
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	8
Spec Ops: The Line	220	7
Spider-Man 3	155	3
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	3
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	6
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	5
Spin Jam	174	3
Splatterhouse	200	5
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	7
Split/Second: Velocity	192	9
Sports Champions	196	8
Sports Champions 2	225	6
SSX	216	4
Stacking	203	8
Starhawk	219	8
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	6
Star Trek	231	5
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	5
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	6
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	6
Star Wars: Pinball	230	7
Start The Party!	196	7
Stormrise	178	5
Stranglehold	159	6
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	9
Street Fighter IV	176	9
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	8
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	8
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	7
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	9
Stuntman: Ignition	157	8
Super Stardust HD	155	7
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	5
Superstars V8 Racing	181	6
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	7
Super Street Fighter IV	191	9
Supremacy MMA	211	4
Syndicate	216	7
Tales Of Graces f	222	7
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tales Of Xillia	234	7
Tales Of Xillia 2	249	7
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	8
Tekken 6	184	9
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	9
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	6
Tetris	202	8
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	6
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	6
The Last Of Us	233	10
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	5
The Walking Dead	231	9
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	2
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	3
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	6
Time Crisis 4	166	7
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	5
TimeShift	162	7
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	5
TNA Impact!	171	7
Tokyo Jungle	223	8
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	8
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	7
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	7
Tomb Raider	229	9
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	8
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	8
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	7
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	7
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	5
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	4
Top Spin 3	168	7
Top Spin 4	203	6
Toy Story 3	195	8
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	6
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	7
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	8
Trash Panic	181	7
Trine	184	8
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	5
Trinity Universe	194	6
Tron Evolution	200	1
Tumble	198	7
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	4
Turok	163	4
Twisted Metal	216	6
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	9
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	8
UFC Undisputed 3	215	8
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	246	9
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	8
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	10
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	9
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Episode 1	233	1
The Unfinished Swan	225	7
Unreal Tournament III	162	8
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	5
Valkyria Chronicles	173	8
Vanquish	197	9
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	7
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	9
Virtua Tennis 3	150	9
Virtua Tennis 4	205	7
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	8
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	8
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	6
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	5
Warhawk	157	8
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	1
Warriors Orochi 3	217	5
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	5
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	2
Wet	184	4
Wheelman	178	7
Where The Wild Things Are	188	5
White Knight Chronicles	190	5
White Knight Chronicles II	207	4
WipEout HD	172	8
Wolfenstein	183	7
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	8
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	8
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	7
WWE All Stars	204	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	5
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	9
X-Men Destiny	211	3
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	7
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	6
Yakuza 3	191	8
Yakuza 4	203	8
Yakuza 5*	264	9
Zen Pinball 2	224	9
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	8

VITA



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	7
Army Corps Of Hell	217	6
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	7
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	3
Everybody's Golf	215	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	8
Broken Age	257	5
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	2
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	8
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	9
Dead Nation	201	8
Destiny Of Spirits	244	7
Dokuro	230	7
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	8
Escape Plan	216	8
FIFA Football	216	8
fiOw	151	9
Flower	176	8
Gravity Crash	187	8
Gravity Rush	219	9
Hotline Miami	233	9
Hustle Kings	216	8
Joe Danger	194	9
Killzone: Mercenary	236	9
LittleBigPlanet	223	9
Little Deviants	215	6
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	8
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	221	7
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	5
Mortal Kombat	219	8
MotorStorm RC	217	8
Muramasa Rebirth	234	8
New Little King's Story	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	6
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	8
Orgarhythm	230	5
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
Persona 4 Golden	228	9
PixelJunk Monsters	163	9
Puddle	222	8
Rayman Origins	216	8
Reality Fighters	215	5
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	5
Ridge Racer	216	4
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	8
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	3
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	7
Soul Sacrifice	232	9
Sound Shapes	223	8
Superbeat Xonic	265	7
Superfrog HD	234	4
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	7
Sumoni: Demon Arts	230	4
Super Stardust Delta	216	8
Tearaway	239	8
Terraria	232	8
Touch My Katamari	216	8
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	8
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	8
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	8
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	8
Unit 13	216	6
Velocity Ultra	233	8
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	8
Virtue's Last Reward	227	8
WipEout 2048	215	9

*denotes import review

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...

Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Hatsune Miku Future Tone
WHY (was it chosen?)
I freaking LOVE rhythm-action

LUKE ALBIGÉS

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.
While everyone else is caning *Overwatch* or still getting their money's worth out of the wonderful *Uncharted 4*, I've imported the latest *Project Diva* title and it's the best yet. Lumping together over 200 songs from across the arcade version and various home releases, it's kind of a greatest hits collection of everything awesome the virtual pop star and her equally virtual friends have done. Truth be told, it's mainly to keep me off *Overwatch* – I can feel Blizzard's game drawing me down a dark path every time I play it (my addictive personality make it an incredibly dangerous game for my personal life) and somehow, I reached the conclusion that this would be something else to play. In moderation. I mean, that was the plan. Oops, I did it again...



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Borderlands 2
WHY (was it chosen?)
It's nice to go back to Pandora

REBECCA RICHARDS

EVER SINCE
TELLTALE'S Tales From The Borderlands turned out way better than expected, I've found myself really wanting to return to the best game in the series. So I did, and I can tell you it feels good to be back. I've missed running around as a super-powerful cyborg ninja, ruining goons' days with explosions of colourful numbers. How about that sequel now, Gearbox?



NEXT MONTH IN
PLAY.



DINO BOTS, ROLL OUT!

HORIZON ZERO DAWN

Guerrilla's epic adventure leads the hunt
for PS4's next killer exclusive

ON iOS & ANDROID 28 JULY